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**SLAVEHOLDING NOT SINFUL.**

SLAVERY,

*The Punishment of Man's Sin,*

ITS REMEDY,

THE GOSPEL OF CHRIST.



AN ARGUMENT BEFORE THE GENERAL SYNOD OF THE  
REFORMED PROTESTANT DUTCH CHURCH,  
OCTOBER, 1855.

BY SAMUEL B. HOW, D. D.

PASTOR OF THE FIRST REFORMED DUTCH CHURCH, NEW-BRUNSWICK, N. J.

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## A RELATION

OF CIRCUMSTANCES THAT CALLED FORTH THE FOLLOWING

## ADDRESS.

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THE Author of the following address to the General Synod of the Reformed Protestant Dutch Church of North America, deems it proper to state : that at the meeting of the Synod in the City of New-Brunswick in June last, "a communication was received from the North Carolina Classis of the German Reformed Church, purporting to be a certified copy of their action in reference to seeking an ecclesiastical connection with the Reformed Protestant Dutch Church, which was referred to the Committee on Correspondence," of which he was the chairman. That committee recommended to Synod the adoption of the following resolution :

*"Resolved, That Synod cordially reciprocate the fraternal feelings expressed by the Classis of North Carolina of the German Reformed Church ; that they regard with favor their proposal of effecting an ecclesiastical relation with our Church ; and that so soon as they present duly authenticated testimonials of their accepting its standards and constitution, they shall be received as one of its integral parts, and so be fully incorporated with it, and shall be known among us as the German Reformed Classis of North Carolina, of the Reformed Protestant Dutch Church of North America."*



The Report recommending this resolution was accepted. But when it was moved to adopt the above resolution, debate followed, and it was discussed at some length; when Rev. Thornton Butler, who had been recognized by Synod as the Commissioner from the North Carolina Classis, perceiving from the debate that several members of the Synod were opposed to forming a connection with them, withdrew the application of the Classis. He was afterwards requested, by a resolution of the Synod, to "reconsider the withdrawal of his papers, and leave them in the hands of the Synod until their meeting in October next: whereupon he consented to leave them in the hands of the Synod, subject to the advice of his Classis." According to the report of the *New-York Tribune*, of June 16, 1855, there were two principal objections raised against the receiving of the Classis by the Synod; the one was, that it was inexpedient to do so, because it would endanger the peace of the Church, and expose it to being distracted by the agitation of the question of slavery. This was urged by Rev. Dr. Wyckoff, of Albany, and Rev. Dr. Bethune, of Brooklyn. The other was, that slaveholding is a sin, and that we ought not to hold communion with slaveholders. This objection was urged by Rev. Isaac G. Duryee, of Schenectady, who said, that he had "conscientious scruples against the formation of such a relation." According to the *Tribune*, he declared

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as follows : "I can say that my inmost soul shrinks from the idea of our extending the fellowship of our church to slaveholding churches as I shrink from the touch of the torpedo," etc., etc. The writer of this was not aware at the time that there were any Abolitionists among the ministers of the Reformed Dutch Church, or that such feelings as those expressed by Rev. Mr. Duryee existed in the minds of any members of the Synod. He knew that slavery had existed in the Church for generations past, and that it now exists ; and that there is no prohibition of it in the form of our church-government, and that it had never been reprov'd by General Synod. He was, therefore, taken completely by surprise. He, however, attempted a reply, and among other things, reminded the Synod that, as a judicatory of the Church of Christ, they were bound to administer its government according to the laws and principles taught us in God's holy word ; and that, as there was no prohibition of the holding of slaves, and nothing whatever in that holy word to warrant our refusal to form an ecclesiastical connection with these German brethren, we ought to assent to their proposal by receiving and incorporating them with our Church.

At the late meeting of Synod in October, in the city of New-York, the question of receiving this Classis was again considered. On the third day of the session of Synod, a motion was made and carried

in the affirmative to lay the whole subject on the table; the vote at first standing 44 ayes and 41 nays. The ayes and nays were called for, and the vote then resulted in 50 ayes and 47 noes. The Commissioner from the Classis of North Carolina considered this vote as clearly exhibiting the feelings of a majority of the Synod towards the Classis, and withdrew from its sessions. He also expressed to the Chairman of the Committee of Correspondence his desire that he would do nothing more in relation to this business, and received from him the assurance that he would comply with his request. When, therefore, on the following day, this matter was called up, he stated to the Synod, that he considered the vote on the motion to lay this whole subject on the table as decisive, and that he had promised the Commissioner from North Carolina that he would take no further part in any doings of the Synod on this question. The following resolution was finally adopted:

*"Whereas,* It is evident from the opinions expressed on this floor, that the Synod can not unite cordially in receiving the Classis of North Carolina within the limits of our Church; and whereas the Synod desire to treat the Classis of North Carolina with the courtesy and kindness due to respected brethren, therefore

*"Resolved,* That the Commissioner of the Classis of North Carolina be requested to withdraw his papers."

On the second day of the sessions of Synod, it being the order of the day to take this subject up, the Chairman of the Committee on Correspondence delivered, with the exception of a few passages which

he omitted when speaking before the Synod, the following

## A D D R E S S .

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MR. PRESIDENT: Two principal objections have been made against receiving into our Church the Classis of North Carolina. The first objection is, that if we do so, we shall destroy the peace of our Church, and introduce among ourselves distraction and division by the agitation of the slavery question. The second objection is, that slaveholding is a sin, and that therefore, we ought not to admit slaveholders into our Church. I shall attempt, first of all, to show that slaveholding is not a sin, and that therefore, there is no reason to exclude slaveholders, simply because they are slaveholders, from union and communion with us. If this is established, then both objections necessarily fail: for it would be alike absurd and wicked to disturb the peace of the Church for that which the Scriptures teach us is not a sin, and which was no bar to church-fellowship with the Apostles of Christ.

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### I. THE HOLDING OF A SLAVE NOT A SIN.

It has been said that " American Slavery is at war

with the Declaration of Independence, the Constitution of the United States, natural justice, and Christianity"—“that slavery is a sin against God and a crime against man, etc.”\* To these bold statements we reply, that the mass of the American people have never considered the holding of slaves as at war with the Declaration of Independence; that the Supreme Court of the Nation has declared that it is not against the Constitution of the United States; and that it is not against natural justice and Christianity, we shall now endeavor to prove. We admit that it is an evil much to be lamented, but we deny that it is a sin against God and a crime against man.

As I am addressing the Supreme Ecclesiastical Court of the Reformed Protestant Dutch Church, my final appeal shall be to the Holy Scriptures as the inspired word of God, the only infallible and perfect rule of right and wrong, truth and error, in matters of religious faith and duty. We all profess to believe that “the law and the testimony of God” are the standard of duty and the rule of faith, and that if any “speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them.”

That the holding of slaves is not a sin we prove from the following passages of Scripture:

- ✓ 1. 1 Tim. 6: 1-5: “Let as many servants as are

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\* See 13th Annual Report of the American and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society, pp. 8 and 16.

under the yoke count their own masters worthy of all honor, that the name of God and his doctrine be not blasphemed. And they that have believing masters, let them not despise them, because they are brethren; but rather do them service, because they are faithful and beloved, partakers of the benefit. These things teach and exhort. If any man teach otherwise, and consent not to wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which is according to godliness; he is proud, knowing nothing, but doting about questions and strifes of words, whereof cometh envy, strife, railings, evil surmisings, perverse disputings of men of corrupt minds, and destitute of the truth, supposing that gain is godliness: from such withdraw thyself."

We begin with the New Testament to obviate an objection that might be urged if we should begin with the Old Testament, that the Christian dispensation has greater light and freedom and privileges than were enjoyed under the Jewish dispensation, and that therefore, though slavery might have lawfully existed under the latter, that can not be pleaded in favor of its existing under the former. Our endeavor will be to show that they both entirely agree on the point before us.

The term "servants" in this passage of sacred Scripture is in the original Greek, "*douloi*," the primary meaning of which, Robinson in his Greek and

English Lexicon of the New Testament, gives as "a bondsman, slave, servant, pr. by birth; diff. from *andrapodon*, one enslaved in war."—He says: "In a family the *doulos* was one *bound to serve, a slave*, and was the property of his master, 'a living possession,' as Aristotle calls him."—Schleusner gives as the meaning of the term—1. *proprie*: *servus*, minister, *homo non liber, nec sui juris et opponitur aleutheros*, that is, "its first and proper signification is that of a slave, a serving man, a man who is not free and at his own disposal." But to put his meaning beyond doubt, the Apostle adds the words, "under *the yoke*," which is an emblem of servitude or of the rule to which any one is subject. He here unquestionably speaks of slaves who are under bondage to their masters. Bloomfield says: "The commentators are not sufficiently aware of the strength of this expression, in which there is a blending of two expressions to put the case in its strongest point of view (supposing even the harshest bondage) in order to make the injunction to obedience the more forcible." These slaves the Apostle commands to "count their own masters, whether heathen or Christians or Jews, worthy of all honor," and the reason that he gives for this is, "that the name of God and his doctrine be not blasphemed." It was lawful by the law of Moses, to make of the heathen bondmen for life, and to hold their children in bondage. But not so with

one who was born a Jew. He was permitted to serve only for six years, and it is quite possible that there were some false teachers who asserted that, as no Jew was to remain a slave for life, so ought no Christian.

This sentiment, if it had prevailed among those slaves who were Christians, would have caused them to despise and hate their masters, and to withhold from them the respect and obedience which they owed to them. They would thus bring a reproach on the Gospel as if it were a doctrine that taught men contempt for their superiors, and disobedience to their lawful commands. From speaking of the duty which slaves owe to their masters in general, the Apostle passes on to speak to those who have believing masters who are their brethren in Christ. Here the questions whether the holding of slaves is a sin, and whether we should hold Christian communion with slaveholders, are fairly met. Does the Apostle then teach the slaves that they ought to be free? that their Christian masters sin in holding them in bondage? and does he, with apostolic authority and in the name of Jesus Christ, command the masters to give them their freedom? He does nothing of the kind. He not only does not require these Christian masters to set their slaves at liberty, but he speaks of them as "faithful and beloved" brethren, "partakers of the benefit," and for this very reason he exhorts Christian slaves not to despise them, but




rather to do them service. It seems impossible for the question before us to be more fully and directly settled. But the Apostle proceeds further. He says that "if any man teach otherwise," that is, if there is any Abolitionist among you, any Immediate Emancipationist, who says that no Christian can, without sin, hold a slave; that if he holds any, he is bound in duty immediately to liberate them, and if he does not, then true Christians are bound to refuse church-fellowship and communion with him lest they should partake of his sin—if any man teach these things, then he does "not consent to wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which is according to godliness." This we should suppose would have been a sufficient rebuke. But to show the criminality of the doctrine of these early Abolitionists in the Christian church, the Apostle proceeds to say, that he who teaches their doctrine "is proud, knowing nothing, but doting about questions and strifes of words, whereof cometh envy, strife, railings, evil surmisings, perverse disputings of men of corrupt minds, and destitute of the truth, supposing that gain is godliness." He, then, in a most marked manner, shows the falseness and danger of their sentiments by commanding Timothy, "from such withdraw thyself," that is, hold no intercourse with them. We shall not inquire how far this precept extends, nor whether it is a prohibition against

holding church communion with Abolitionists; nor whether the Apostle does not mean to teach us that their sentiments are so revolutionary, so subversive of the established order of society, so calculated to produce discontent and resentment in the minds of the slaves as to endanger not only public but domestic peace and safety, and to produce by stirring up the slaves to insurrection, massacres and horrors, like those of the Massacres of St. Domingo, in the year 1790. Certain it is, that he commands us to withdraw from them.

2. We now turn to the Old Testament. We are ✓ informed, Gen. 17: 1-14, that when Abram was ninety years old and nine, the Lord again ratified the Covenant which he had made with him, and instituted circumcision as the sacramental sign of the Covenant. He commanded: "He that is eight days old among you, every man-child, in your generations—he that is born in thy house, and he that is bought with thy money, must needs be circumcised." (V. 12, 13) "He that is bought with thy money," means the bought slave, and to such God commanded the sign of his covenant to be administered. Here then God took Abraham, a slaveholder, his children and his bought slaves into covenant with himself without expressing the slightest disapprobation of his holding slaves, but in the fullest manner authorizing him to retain them as a portion of his family or

household by taking him and them into covenant with him. Abraham was a large slaveholder, for we are told, Gen. 14: 14, 15, that he armed three hundred and eighteen of his slaves to pursue the kings who had captured Lot; and the servant whom he had commissioned to procure a wife for Isaac, in recounting to the family of Rebecca the great wealth of Abraham said: "The Lord hath blessed my master greatly, and he is become great; and he hath given him flocks and herds, and silver and gold, and men-servants and maid-servants, and camels and asses." (Gen. 24: 35.) Here *men-servants*—the original term means servants who are bought, or inherited slaves—such men-servants and maid-servants are enumerated as a part of the property belonging to Abraham—property which the Lord hath given him; in the bestowal of which the Lord had blessed him, and the possession of which Abraham's servant urged as a reason for Rebecca marrying his son.

But what is the character that is given to Abraham? The Apostle James tells us that this slaveholding Abraham "was called *the friend of God*." (Jas. 2: 23.) The Apostle Paul teaches us that he was "the father of all them that believe." (Rom. 4: 11.) In the parable of the rich man and Lazarus, to teach us the wonderful change that death made in the condition of the poor beggar, Christ tells us that "he was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom." (Luke 16: 22.)



The Covenant which we are considering, was made with Abraham and with his children that should come after him in their generations, for an everlasting Covenant. It was by this covenant that God first organized his visible Church on earth. He and his descendants were now separated from the world by God himself, and were taken into a special covenant-relation with him. The promise given was: "I will be a God unto thee and to thy seed after thee," and as the sign and the seal of this Covenant, circumcision was instituted; and thenceforth the descendants of Abraham, through Isaac and Jacob, became "an holy people unto the Lord their God;" and the Lord chose them to be a peculiar people to himself above all nations that were upon the earth. (Deut. 14: 2.) A special promise given to Abraham was: "In thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed." This promised seed was CHRIST. Because of the rejection of CHRIST by the Jews, the natural descendants of Abraham, they became an apostate church, and the kingdom of God was taken away from them and given to a nation or a race of men bringing forth the fruits thereof. They ceased to be the peculiar people of God, and thenceforth the middle wall of partition, the ceremonial law that separated the Jew from the Gentile, was broken down; and believing Gentiles were admitted into the Church along with believing Jews. The covenant, however,

was the same, and through CHRIST "the blessing of Abraham comes on the Gentiles, for they are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus, and so they are Abraham's seed and heirs according to the promise." Circumcision taught the Jew to look forward by faith to a coming Messiah to save him from sin and make him a child of God. Baptism teaches us to look back and rejoice that the promised seed of Abraham, from whom he receives the blessings of salvation, has come. Circumcision now on the part of the Jews is the standing testimony against them that they reject Christ, and so are rejected by him. Baptism is the standing testimony that we believe in Christ as the seed of Abraham, in whom it was promised that all nations should be blessed. *Before* his coming circumcision, and *since* his coming, baptism distinguished from the world the organized visible Church of God, which has existed from the institution of circumcision, and will exist to the end of time. But this covenant was made with a slaveholder, and this visible Church was organized in his family, and his slaves received the sign of the covenant along with himself and his children.

Moreover, the non-holding of slaves has never been made a term or condition of church fellowship. Bingham, in his *Antiquities of the Christian Church*, informs us that, "We find by the author of the

Constitutions, under the name of the Apostles,\* that in the first ages of the Christian Church, one part of the inquiry that was made concerning those who offered themselves to baptism was, whether they were slaves or freemen. If they were slaves to a heathen, they were only taught their obligations to please their master, that the word of God might not be blasphemed; and the master had no further concern in their baptism, as being himself an infidel; but if the master were a Christian, then the testimony of the master was first to be required concerning the life and conversation of his slave before he could be admitted to the privilege of baptism. If he gave a laudable account of him he was received; if otherwise, he was rejected till he approved himself to his master. So far in those days it was thought necessary and serviceable to religion to grant Christian masters a power over their slaves, that without their testimony and approbation they could not be accepted as fit candidates for baptism."† So far, too, we may add, were they from considering the holding of slaves to be sinful in itself.

3. Our third argument to prove that the holding of slaves is not sinful, is derived from Exod. 20: 17. "Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's house; thou

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\* Supposed to be of the second and third centuries.

† Book 11th, chap. 5, sec. 4, p. 502. See also Southern Presbyterian Review, Vol. 2, No. 4, pp. 532-533.

shalt not covet thy neighbor's wife, nor his man-servant, nor his maid-servant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor anything that is thy neighbor's." This precept establishes the right of property, and forbids not only the unjust depriving the owner of his lawful property, but even the secret desire to do so. It strikes down at once into the dust Communism and Socialism. It teaches us that there is a division, and that there are rights of property; that there are masters and that there are slaves, and bids us to respect the right of the master, and not to covet his man-servant or his maid-servant.

The division of property and the security of the owner in the possession of it, lie at the foundation of civilized and Christian life, and where they are unknown men are wandering tribes of barbarians, ignorant, rapacious, and debased. To cultivate the arts and sciences that embellish and exalt human life, and especially to have colleges and churches, the right of property must be respected, and the desire and the attempt to deprive others of property which the law of God and the law of the land have made it lawful for them to hold, is to strike a blow at the very existence of civilization and Christianity. We admit that there are great inequalities in the possession of property and in the conditions of men, and that there are many evils to be deplored. But with all their inequalities and evils, the worst despotism on earth


is to be preferred to a state of constant anarchy and consequently of constant warfare. Oppressive as despotism may be, yet under it the masses of men live in comparative quiet and security. Under anarchy no man is safe in the possession of life or property. God therefore commands us to respect the right of property, to leave the lawful owner of it in the undisturbed possession of it, even though it be a man-servant or a maid-servant. What though we may think slavery unjust, yet there it is, it actually exists, for wise and good reasons God permits it, and he commands us not to seek by force to remove it. He has sent forth no messengers of violence and of war, no spiritual knight-errants to fight with carnal weapons, and by force and bloodshed to remove the evils and oppressions that exist, or that we may imagine to exist among men. This was the plan of Mohammed, who went forth with sword and fire to punish and destroy all those who did not agree with him in what he considered truth and right. This was the plan of the French infidel propagandists of 1793; and this we fear is the plan of many amongst us, and we regret to say of some who are called ministers of the Gospel, a name which they do not deserve and should not bear. No, "the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong-holds." We are ministers of peace, not of war, and they who would put



down what they consider wrong among us by violence and bloodshed, might have made good followers of Mohammed and able allies to French infidel republicans; but we can not admit their claim to be the ministers of the Gospel of the Prince of Peace.

4. Our fourth argument to prove that slavery is not sinful, is derived from the ceremonial and political law given to the Israelites by God, as well as the moral law. One of the most remarkable of the institutions of the Levitical law, was the passover which commemorated the deliverance of the Israelites from their bondage in Egypt. We are told that the Lord said to Moses and Aaron: "This is the ordinance of the passover; there shall no stranger eat thereof. But every man's *servant that is bought for money*, when thou hast circumcised him, then shall he eat thereof. A foreigner and an hired servant shall not eat thereof." When the bought servant was circumcised he became a member of his master's family, and was entitled to various privileges which were not granted to the foreigner who was a hired servant. He became one of the covenant people of God, for his circumcision signified this to him; and if he was *an Israelite indeed*, then it was to him, as well as to Abraham, "a seal of the righteousness of faith."

Another remarkable law was that of the Jubilee, which returned every fiftieth year, when every Hebrew servant was set free with his children, and



was restored to his own family and the possessions of his father. But it was not so with servants who were foreigners. The law in relation to them was as follows: "Both thy bond-men and thy bond-maids which thou shalt have, shall be of the heathen that are round about you; of them shall ye buy bond-men and bond-maids. Moreover, of the children of the strangers that do sojourn among you, of them shall ye buy and of their families that are with you which they begat in your land, and they shall be your possession; and ye shall take them as an inheritance for your children after you to inherit them for a possession. They shall be your bondmen for ever." (Lev. 25: 44-46.) It is remarkable that this law was given within the space of the first year after the departure of the Israelites out of Egypt.\* But in all the history of their deliverance from the cruel bondage in which they were there held, no mention is made of any slaves among them; nor when we consider their abject poverty is it probable that they possessed any. It seems probable, therefore, that the laws relating to slaveholding were given to them in anticipation of the existence of slavery among them after they were settled in the land of Canaan: and if so, they were plainly permitted by God to hold slaves. It has been said that when Abraham was taken into covenant by God, the holding of slaves was fully

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\* Compare Exodus 19: 1, with Numbers 10: 11,

established, and that had he even wished and attempted to do away with it, we have no reason to suppose that he would have succeeded, but would have exposed himself and his family to the resentment of those among whom he dwelt, and that therefore God permitted him to hold slaves. But this can not be said of the laws in relation to slavery which were given to the Israelites. They were then separated from all other nations, alone and in the wilderness, they were under the special protection of God and had nothing to fear from any of the neighboring nations. But instead of forbidding them to hold slaves, he expressly permitted them to do so. We might produce other arguments from the laws given by Moses to the Israelites ; but we think that enough has been presented to show that the holding of slaves was not forbidden by God, and was no bar to the enjoying of church privileges.

It may be objected, however, that under the Old Testament dispensation many things were permitted which are not tolerated under the New Testament dispensation, a dispensation of greater light and purity and privileges than belonged to the old dispensation. Let us then examine the New Testament and inquire what are its teachings on this subject.

1. Our first remark is, that Christ and his Apostles in the strongest manner assert the divine inspiration and binding authority of Moses and the Prophets,

that is, of the Old Testament Scriptures. On this point there was no dispute between them and the Jews. It was Jesus Christ the Son of God who gave to the Israelites their laws in the wilderness, and who spake by his spirit in the prophets,\* who was again visibly present among the Jews in the humble form of the Man of Nazareth, explaining and enforcing the laws which he had before given to them. The Law of Ten Commandments is referred to and argued from by both Christ and his Apostles, as the Law of God of universal and perpetual obligation, and consequently the tenth command is in as full force at the present day as when it was first given, and the right of the master to his man-servant and maid-servant remains as strong as at the first. Moreover, all true believers in Christ are children of Abraham, and so under and interested in the Covenant which God made with him. "Know ye, therefore," says the Apostle, "that they which are of faith the same are the children of Abraham. . . . So then they which be of faith are blessed with faithful Abraham. . . . If ye be Christ's then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise. (Gal. 3 : 7, 9, 29.) It is under that covenant which God made with Abraham to be a God to him and to his seed after him, and of which circumcision, before the

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\* Luke 24 : 27. Acts 24 : 14, etc.

death of Christ, was the sign, and baptism now is and has been since his death, that the visible Church is now placed, and believing masters with their believing slaves are now as they ever have been entitled to the sign and privileges of the covenant.

2. Our Lord repeatedly spoke of slaves, especially in several of his parables, without the slightest intimation that he condemned slavery, and in such a way as plainly showed that he considered it lawful. Among others we refer to the parable of the Unmerciful Servant, Matt. 18: 23-35. Of the Talents, Matt. 25: 14-30. Of the Unprofitable Servants, Luke 17: 7, 10.

3. We are told, Matt. 8: 5-13, that a Centurion came to Jesus beseeching him to heal his sick servant. When Jesus offered to come and heal him, the centurion replied: "Lord, I am not worthy that thou shouldest come under my roof: but speak the word only, and my servant shall be healed. For I am a man under authority, having soldiers under me: and I say to this man, Go, and he goeth; and to another, Come, and he cometh; and to my servant, (slave, *doulo*,) Do this, and he doeth it." Here was a heathen, high in office, acknowledging to Christ that he was a slaveholder, and asking of him to heal his servant. If the holding of slaves had been sinful, Jesus would, we doubt not, have so informed him. Instead of this he highly commended his faith. He

marvelled and said to them that followed, Verily I say unto you, I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel. Did he say that a slaveholder could not be a Christian? that he could not be saved? that he would not own him as a disciple? He said just the reverse. "I say unto you that many shall come from the east and west and shall sit down with Abraham and Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven," plainly intimating that this believing Roman centurion should be one of them.

The divinely-inspired writers of the Books of the New Testament imitate their Master, for while they address commands, exhortations, and admonitions to masters and slaves, they do not give the slightest intimation that slaveholding is sinful. We shall select some of the passages which refer to this subject:

Eph. 6 : 5-8.—Servants, be obedient unto them that are your masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in singleness of your heart as unto Christ; not with eye-service as men-pleasers, but as the servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart; with good will doing service, as to the Lord and not to men: knowing that whatsoever good thing any man doeth, the same shall he receive of the Lord, whether he be bond or free.

Coloss. 3 : 22-25.—Servants, obey in all things your masters according to the flesh, not with eye-service as men-pleasers; but in singleness of heart, fearing God: and whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men: knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance: for ye serve the Lord Jesus Christ. But he that doeth wrong shall receive for the wrong which he hath done: and there is no respect of persons.

Titus 2 : 9, 10.—Exhort servants to be obedient to their own masters, and to please them in all things; not answering again; not purloining, but showing all good fidelity; that they may adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things.

1 Peter 2 : 18-21.—Servants, be subject to your masters with all fear ; not only to the good and gentle, but also to the froward, For this is thankworthy, if a man for conscience toward God endure grief, suffering wrongfully. For what glory is it, if, when ye be buffeted for your faults, ye shall take it patiently ? but if, when ye do well, and suffer for it, ye take it patiently, this is acceptable with God. For even hereunto were ye called.\*

The Apostles fully recognize the right of the masters in their servants, and to their obedience and service, and exhort the servants to yield these to their masters, as their duty and for conscience toward God.

We think that we have fully established from Scripture our position, that the holding of slaves is not a sin. We might indeed have pursued a shorter course, and have challenged the Abolitionists to produce a single law of God forbidding it. We are told that "whosoever committeth sin transgresseth the law, *for sin is the transgression of the law !*" (1 John 3 : 4,) and that "sin is not imputed when there is no law." (Rom. 5 : 13.) (Slavery is constantly spoken of in the sacred Scriptures, but there is no direct prohibition of it, no special law against it, and therefore it does not come under the definition of sin given by the inspired apostle. We can not therefore but consider the harsh and bitter denunciations of slaveholders as both unwarranted and anti-scriptural.)

Before leaving this part of our subject, we think it

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\* In all the above quotations from the Epistles of the Apostle Paul, he uses the term *douloi*, bond slaves—the Apostle Peter uses the term *oiketai*, which also sometimes means slaves. See Luke 16 : 13.

right to refer to two cases of fugitive slaves. The one is that of Onesimus, who ran away from his master, Philemon, who was a Christian, and had been converted through the ministry of Paul. Though a slaveholder, the Apostle commends him for his love and faith toward the Lord Jesus and toward all saints. Onesimus, his fugitive slave, came to Rome, and was there converted also under the ministry of Paul, and had, by his exemplary temper and conduct, gained his high esteem. How does Paul act under these circumstances? He was an inspired apostle, invested with authority from Christ to teach Christian doctrines and to enforce Christian duties, and therefore his conduct in this case would be a precedent to guide the Church in all future similar cases. He explicitly and fully recognized the right of Philemon, and sent back his slave, at the same time earnestly commending him to the mercy and forgiveness and Christian love of his master.

Another strong test-case is that of Hagar, the fugitive slave of Abraham. She had fled from the oppression of her mistress, Sarah. The angel of the Lord—or rather, as we think the words should be translated, the Angel-Jehovah—found her in the wilderness, and said, “Hagar, Sarai’s maid, whence camest thou? and whither wilt thou go? And she said, I flee from the face of my mistress Sarai. And the angel of the Lord said unto her, Return to thy



mistress, and submit thyself under her hands." (Gen. 16: 6-9.) Here the Lord Jehovah taught Hagar her duty as a slave, to submit to and obey her mistress, and recognized the right of masters to their slaves.

We have thus far considered only the question whether slavery is a sin, and have shown that Abraham was a slaveholder when the Lord called and entered into covenant with him; that at the first organization of the visible Church of God, slaves and their children were admitted into it along with their masters, and that the sign of the covenant was equally administered to both; that the laws which God gave to the Israelites by Moses clearly recognized the right of masters in their slaves and to their service; that Christ and his disciples enforced these laws; that under the Gospel dispensation slaveholders and their slaves were admitted to church-membership and its privileges; that special commands were given to regulate the intercourse between masters and their slaves; and that the Apostle Paul, and even the Angel-Jehovah himself, sent back to their owners slaves who had run away from them. It is evident from this that God has not made the holding of slaves a sin, and that to attempt to exclude all slaveholders, simply as and because they are such, from church communion, is a usurpation of unlawful power against the covenant and the law of God. We have made our appeal to the Scriptures of truth, heartily assent-

ing to the teachings of the confession of faith of our Church, which says: "We believe in the sufficiency of the Holy Scriptures to be the only rule of faith. We believe that those Holy Scriptures fully contain the word of God, and that whatsoever man ought to believe unto salvation is sufficiently taught therein. . . . Therefore we reject with all our hearts whatsoever doth not agree with this infallible rule which the apostles have taught us, saying, 'Try the spirits, whether they are of God. Likewise, 'If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house.'" (Art. 1, § 7.)

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## II. REASONS FOR THE PERMISSION OF SLAVERY:

Since God has permitted slavery to exist in his Church, and has made it the subject of special legislation, there must be not only sufficient, but good and wise reasons for his so doing. Should we be unable to discover these reasons, it would be our duty to bow in humble acquiescence, assured that he ever acts with infinite wisdom and goodness. But there are most important reasons for what He has done, some of which we shall now attempt to specify.

*Slavery is one of the penal effects of the fall, and of the great wickedness of men.\* The only effectual remedy for these evils, is the redemption of men from sin by*

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\* See Appendix.

our Lord Jesus Christ; and this redemption is applied to them through the instrumentality of the word, and of the ministers of God which he has given to the Church.


1. At the very time when God pronounced on man the sentence of death, immediately after his first sin, he said to the Serpent: "I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed: it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel." It is here foretold that there would be constant enmity through the whole period of the power of "that Old Serpent, called the Devil and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world," (Rev. 12: 9,) together with wicked men, whom he rules, and who are called "the children of the devil," (1 John 3: 10,) and the Lord Jesus Christ, the seed of the woman. It is foretold, that in this contest the seed of the woman should bruise the serpent's head, that it should inflict a mortal blow on his power; and that the serpent should bruise his heel, that it should injure his human nature, in which he dwelt and trod upon the earth. This was accomplished, when Christ "through death destroyed him that had the power of death, that is, the devil, and delivered them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage." (Heb. 2: 14, 15.) This promise gave the first gleam of light and hope to our fallen race. All the cruelties and oppressions and deaths that

have ever existed among men, have been caused by their apostasy from God, and the delusions and temptations of the devil. The remedy for all this is the redemption that is in Christ Jesus. This is the remedy that God has provided, and there is no other. The universal extension of the Gospel of Christ, in its purity and power, over the whole world, is that which alone can remove the evils of the fall.

2. This truth was more fully revealed when God gave to Abraham the promise: "In thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed. The exposition of this promise is given to us by the Apostle, when he says: "Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as one, And to thy seed, which is Christ." He says: "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the Law, being made a curse for us. . . . That the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ, that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith." (Gal. 3: 16, 13, 14.) This blessing of Abraham, God communicates to the world through the Church, and a clear understanding of the origin, the nature, the privileges, and the design of the visible Church, which began in the family of Abraham, will greatly assist us to form right conclusions on the subject of slavery.

3. The Church had its origin at a time when the world was full of idolatry and wickedness, and

seemed to be fast hastening to the same state of violence and crime as existed before the flood. Then, God interposed in wrath, and, with the exception of Noah and his family, destroyed the whole race for their sins. Now, however, he interposed in mercy, not to destroy, but to reform the race. To arrest the wickedness that was spreading in all directions, and prevent its universal prevalence, he called Abraham, and entered into covenant with him. He appointed circumcision, as its sign and seal that he would be a God to him and to his seed after him; and he commanded him to administer this sign and seal of the covenant—not to the servants that he had hired, but to him that is “bought with money of any stranger which is not of thy seed.” (Gen. 17: 12.) Does the Abolitionist burn with indignation against the wickedness of slaveholders, and of those who do not join in his wrath and denunciations against them? Does he cry: “Let justice be done though the heavens fall?” Let him look back and see this justice done in the terrible desolations of the flood. But did this reform man? It is easy to declaim against popular evils and popular sins to which we ourselves have no personal temptations; but it may be laid down as a sure maxim, that the man who does not resist and repel the temptations to which he is personally exposed; who declaims against the sin of others with whom he has no personal connection, and from whom



he has no reason to fear personal evil, or expect personal profit, while he readily complies with whatever is popular in the Church or the world, and is ready, and even foremost, to extol whatever the community among whom he lives extols, and to decry whatever it decries, would be one of the strongest advocates of slavery among slaveholders, and one of the loudest demanders of abolition among the enemies of slavery. But let us suppose that slavery was exterminated by violence, and that every slaveholder was compelled to relinquish all his slaves, would this better the condition of the world? Would this arrest oppression and injustice, and make all men benevolent and upright? It would merely set loose a multitude of ignorant, unprincipled, immoral men, and give them the power to follow the promptings of their evil hearts. No permanent and beneficial reformation can be effected, except through the mercy and grace of God in Christ, and these are usually bestowed through the instrumentality of his Church, *by which God diminishes and will finally remove the evils of slavery.*

A slave belongs to the lowest condition of men, and is often exposed to injuries and oppression from his master without being able to obtain relief. To mitigate the evils of his condition, to teach his master that though he is a slave, he is yet a man, an immortal and unaccountable being like himself; to assert his rights, and shelter him from injury, God

took him into covenant with himself, and along with his master and his master's children, commanded him to be circumcised. He thus taught the master, that while he permitted him to retain the slave as his property, and to require from him labor, and obedience to all his lawful commands, he must beware how he oppressed and injured him; that he, as the covenant-God of his slave, would be the avenger of his wrongs, and that he required of him, as the master, to respect the rights, and endeavor to promote the spiritual welfare of his slave, and to treat him not only as a man, but as a brother in the Lord.

To the slave, too, who was bought from among the heathen, it was a privilege of unspeakable value thus to be admitted to the covenant of the people of God. Not only was the condition of the slave among the heathen much more degraded and wretched than among the Israelites, but he lived and died in spiritual darkness and hopelessness. But among the Hebrews he was placed under the protection of the covenant and law of God. He was taught that he was not a poor, degraded, wretched and friendless outcast; but that the eternal God was his father and his protector, who admitted him to the blessings and the privileges of his covenant, and gave him a name and a place in his Church. How great was the privilege, how rich were the blessings bestowed on him!

Among the laws that God gave to protect the slave

from the cruelty of the master, one was the following: "If a man smite his servant or his maid with a rod, and he die under his hand, he shall be surely punished. Notwithstanding, if he continue a day or two, he shall not be punished for he is his money." Another law was, that: "If a man smite the eye of his servant, or the eye of his maid, that it perish, he shall let him go free for his eye's sake. And if he smite out his man-servant's tooth or his maid-servant's tooth, he shall let him go free for his tooth's sake." (Exod. 21: 20, 21, 26, 27.) Some suppose that the meaning of the words "he shall be punished," in the law relative to beating a slave, is that he shall be punished with death; but many commentators think that it means that he shall be punished at the discretion of the magistrate, according to the circumstances of the case. It is, however, implied in this case, that the master has beaten his slave with a proper and usual instrument of correction, that he did not intend to murder him, and that the loss of property and of services is part of his punishment. We learn, too, that the mutilation of any member of the body of a slave by his master entitled him to freedom.

The Hebrews were commanded to give to their slaves the rest of the Sabbath, and to allow them to partake along with themselves, and their sons and their daughters, of the feasts which were made of the



second tithes. (Deut. 12: 17, 18; 16: 11.) Thus they were not only protected from the cruelty of their masters, but admitted to partake in their most sacred festivals, and to rejoice along with them.

It would be interesting to compare the state of slaves among the Hebrews, with their state in other and heathen nations, and to show its superiority. A writer on Hebrew antiquities has correctly remarked, that though "they were sometimes the subjects of undue severity of treatment, and of sufferings in various ways, (Jer. 34: 8-22,) still it can not be denied that their condition was better among the Hebrews than among some other nations, as may be learnt from their well-known rebellions against the Greeks and Romans. Nor is it at all wonderful that the Hebrews differed from other nations in the treatment of their slaves, in a way so much to their credit, when we consider that in other countries there was no Sabbath for the slave, no day of rest, and no laws sanctioned by the Divinity." (Jahn, §172.)

From the few intimations that are given us on the subject, it seems that pious masters, before the coming of Christ, treated their slaves with strict justice and humanity; that their condition was easy, and that they were not only contented, but often strongly attached to their masters. Who can read the interesting prayers of the eldest servant of Abraham, his fidelity in the discharge of the duty committed to

him, and the terms in which he speaks of his master, without the conviction that strong friendship towards each other existed in both the master and the slave? (Gen. 24.) Holy Job had his slaves, and numerous slaves too; but that he was far from oppressing them, and that he rightly discharged his duty to them, is manifest from his solemn protestation before God: "If I did despise the cause of my man-servant or of my maid-servant when they contended with me, what then shall I do when God riseth up; and when he visiteth, what shall I answer him? Did not He that made me in the womb make him? and did not one fashion us in the womb?" (Job 31 : 13, 15.)

Such were the laws which God gave to the Hebrews, which continued throughout their whole commonwealth, under which Christ, as the Son of Man, and his holy apostles, lived, and to which, in all their teachings and writings, we find no objection—not a single word of their injustice, or of the propriety of their repeal, or even of their amendment. What, too, is more remarkable, is the fact that, if slavery is unjust, Christ, in his comment on, and explanation of the law of Moses, in his Sermon on the Mount, does not give the slightest intimation of it.

When we turn to the inspired writings of the Apostles, writings addressed to fully organized Christian churches, whose government and discipline were administered by the laws of Christ's kingdom, do we

find that they denounced slaveholding as a sin? Do they require a protest against slavery, or enjoin on masters the immediate emancipation of their slaves as a condition of admittance to their communion, or of continuance in it? There is not a syllable of the kind in all their writings. But they do command them to be just and benevolent. The Apostle having exhorted slaves to the faithful discharge of the duties which they owed to their masters, from the fear of God, and a regard to his glory, commands the masters to do their duty to the slaves in the same manner. He says: "And ye masters, do the same thing unto them, forbearing threatening: knowing that your Master also is in heaven, neither is there respect of persons with him." (Eph. 6: 9.) "Masters, give unto your servants that which is just and equal, knowing that ye also have a Master in heaven." (Col. 4: 1.)

The position, then, in which slavery is now placed by the laws of Christ is this: They concede to masters the right of ownership of their slaves, and at the same time they remind them that there are important duties which they owe to them as immortal, and many of them as redeemed creatures, whom God has taken into covenant with himself, and that they must give account to him for the manner in which they discharge or violate these duties. They command the slave to submit to the rule of his master, and to

perform the duties which he owes to him with fidelity, and in the fear of God. To both the master and the slave, they say: "As ye would that men should do to you, do ye also to them likewise:" (Luke 6: 31,) that is, suppose that your conditions and relations in life were changed—that a man was in your condition and held your relations, and you were in his condition and held his relations, as under these circumstances you would wish him to act towards you so do you act towards him. We are aware that this passage has been interpreted to mean, that as no man desires to be held in slavery, so the slaveholder should gratify the desires of the slave and make him free. This is entirely changing the rule, and making it to read thus: "Whatsoever *others* would that you should do to them that do ye to them." But it is: "As *ye* would that others should do to you, do ye also to them likewise." We have no right to desire others to give up their lawful rights, or to do unjustly, for our sakes; nor does Christ intend that we shall sacrifice our rights, or fail to do our duties, for the sake of gratifying the unreasonable or unlawful and sinful desires of others.

Take the case of a murderer and a judge or a jurymen. Would it be right for a judge or a jurymen to reason thus: "If I were in the case of this murderer I should wish to be acquitted, but I ought to do to him what were I in his circumstances, and he in

mine, I would wish him to do to me, and therefore I will acquit him"? The meaning of the precept is, that in our conduct to others we should have a constant regard to the law of God, and act towards them with the same benevolence, truth, and justice, as we have a right to wish them to act towards us; thus conscientiously performing to each other the duties belonging to our relative positions and conditions in life. The law of God, and not the desires of others is the rule of our conduct. A covetous man, through the inordinate love of money, runs deeply in debt to an honest man. He is exceedingly unwilling to pay the debt, and, though he has ample means to do so, yet most earnestly wishes his creditor to relinquish it. Does this precept require the honest and laborious creditor to do so, and to act on such reasonings as this: "This man who owes me a large sum of money, though he is able to pay it, yet wishes me to relinquish my claim to it; true, indeed, it is the gain of years of honest industry and frugality, and the loss of it will reduce me to poverty; but yet, if I were in his circumstances, and had his disposition, and if he were in my circumstances, I should have the same desires as his, and therefore it is my duty to comply with his desires, and relinquish my claim to the debt." If we should thus interpret and act on this precept, we should introduce a frightful state of society. The rule contemplates a continuance of its

established order; that the parent shall retain his authority over his child, and the child revere and obey his parent; that the husband shall be kind and faithful to his wife, and the wife shall be affectionate and faithful to her husband; that the master shall be just and merciful to his slave, and the slave be obedient and faithful to his master.

In the Epistle of Paul to Philemon, we have an admirable illustration of this rule, as applicable to the case of a master and his runaway slave. Having declared his strong affection for Philemon, the high esteem in which he held his Christian character, and the joy and consolation he received from the accounts which he heard of his kindness to the people of God, and usefulness in the Church; he, in the gentlest and kindest terms intercedes with him for Onesimus, his slave. He reminds Philemon of his authority, as an Apostle of Christ, to command him, but he tells him that for love's sake he would rather beseech him. He reminds him that he was Paul the aged. He had grown gray in the service of Christ, and in the midst of perils, and persecutions, and prisons, and poverty, and stonings, and scourges, and shipwrecks, had triumphantly carried forward the banner of the Cross, and won thousands to Christ. And who is he that this intrepid Apostle so humbly beseeches? Is he a man who is claiming what does not belong to him? who is insisting on what is wrong and sinful in itself?

And does Paul quail before this man? Does he who stood undaunted before Rome's cruel tyrant, Nero, cower before an obscure church-member, who wickedly claims what it is sinful for him to possess? Had this been the fact, had God's law forbidden Philemon to hold his slave, would this holy Apostle, whose soul was adamant, and the lightning-flash of whose eye made Felix tremble, would he for an instant have shrunk from telling Philemon that he had no right to hold a slave? that slaveholding is in itself a sin? and if he had not relinquished all claim to the slave, would he not have denounced against him the severest vengeance of Almighty God? This would be the course which some modern reformers would have prescribed to him; but the course which he pursued was directly the opposite: and either this holy and inspired Apostle erred, or they are in grievous error. He knew that Philemon had rights, and he admitted those rights. He knew that, by the Roman law, he had the power to punish his slave, not only with scourges, but with death. (Juvenal 6: 219.) He knew, too, that even a good man might be hurried to excesses by passion and resentment. He, therefore, used entreaties. He says: "Though I might be much bold in Christ to enjoin thee that which is convenient, yet for love's sake I rather beseech thee." Surely, if Philemon had one spark of noble, generous Christian feeling in his heart, he

must have been astonished and humbled at such an address from such a one as he knew Paul to be, the aged Apostle of Christ, illustrious for his services and his sufferings, honored far above all others by God; who had already been rapt up into the third heaven, and now, close on the verge of life, stood ready, and waiting for the summons to ascend to his Saviour and his God, and receive his unfading crown of righteousness—that he should tenderly and earnestly beseech him! And for whom does he beseech him? Why, for his poor runaway slave, Onesimus. But the Apostle does not now speak of him as a slave; he commends him as his son: thus intimating to Philemon, that if he had any respect or love for him, the father, he must show it by kindness for his sake to his son. “I beseech thee for my son, Onesimus, whom I have begotten in my bonds; whom I have sent again. Thou, therefore, receive him that is mine own bowels.” What tenderness! what meekness! what humility! But we can not pursue our remarks further on this wonderful epistle.

Suffice it to say, that both Philemon, the master, and Onesimus, the slave, had been converted to Christ through the instrumentality of Paul, and he, reminding Philemon of this, exhorted him to receive his returned slave, “not now as a servant,” (slave,) “but above a servant,” (slave,) “a brother beloved especially to me; but how much more unto thee, both in



the flesh and in the Lord." No heathen, no infidel, ever could have acted thus from such principles, or have used such arguments and such motives to induce a master to treat with humanity his slaves. Yes; there are Christians that are slaveholders; there are slaves that are Christians; and there are Christians who are the friends of slaveholders and their slaves; and who are willing, like Paul, to hail them as brethren in Christ Jesus, and to sit down with them at the sacramental table of their common Lord and Saviour. When Philemon received from Onesimus himself, and had read this epistle from Paul, with what emotions must he have received his slave! Methinks that with gushing tears, and a throbbing heart, he clasped him in his arms, and welcomed him back to his home; and when at the close of that day he and his household bowed in worship before God, he thanked and praised him with the liveliest gratitude, and with his whole soul, for his conversion and return. You, Christian brethren, who yourselves have tasted of the grace and goodness of the Lord, can judge of his feelings. Through the benign influences of the Gospel, the bitterness of servitude is lessened and sweetened, and "the brother of low degree rejoices in that he is exalted, but the rich in that he is made low." (James 1: 9.) Philemon after his conversion was a better master, and Onesimus after his return was a better slave.

The mitigating influence of Christianity was shown by the conduct of the first Christian emperor of Rome, Constantine the Great, who abolished the punishment of slaves by crucifixion, and facilitated their manumission, which before was attended with great difficulties and no small expense, but which he rendered easy, and no ways chargeable.\*

I owe an apology to Synod for trespassing so long on their time; but I trust that the importance of the subject will be my excuse. Permit me, however, to remark, that our Southern Christian brethren are fully impressed with their duty to communicate the Gospel to their slaves, and to give them suitable religious instructions and privileges. None can more strongly insist on this duty than does the *Southern Presbyterian Review*, a very able and excellent work, published at Columbia, S. C. It says, speaking of their slaves:

"We still bear in mind that they are men, and have immortal souls; that Christ shed his blood to redeem them as well as ourselves, and that we are put in charge of their training as that of our own children, for his kingdom of glory. It is, then, as plain as daylight that Christianity condemns all laws of the State, and all ideas and practices of individuals which put aside the immortality of the slave, and regard him in any other light than that of a moral and responsible fellow-creature of our own. We have no hesitation in declaring that we accord with Judge O'Neill in earnestly desiring the repeal, for example, of the law against teaching the slave to read, . . . because, we conceive the law is both useless and hurtful. It is a useless law, for very many of our best citizens continually break it, or allow it to be broken in our families. Besides, very many of our slaves can read, and do teach and will teach

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\* Ant. Uni. Hist., vol. 15, book 8, ch. 25, pp. 576, 577.

others. . . . But the law is *hurtful*, inasmuch as it throws an obstacle in the way of that which it is plainly the wisdom of the State to foster and encourage, namely, the religious instruction of the young negro population."


The writer asserts that "Christianity, while it civilizes the slave, improves him in all parts of his character. It takes away piecemeal the mass of barbarian ignorance, superstition, and corruption. It is advantageous to their whole physical, intellectual, and moral nature. It makes the slaves better, more intelligent, industrious, tractable, trusty—better men, better servants of God, better servants of man. . . . And what is the effect of Christianity upon the master? It softens his spirit in the sternness of law and discipline, while it confirms and establishes these just bonds. Whatever was formerly harsh in the relation is gradually removed. Mutual intercourse is sweetened by it; the master is no tyrant, the slave no rebel. "Authority ceases to be severe; obedience ceases to be a task." (*Southern Presbyterian Review*, vol. 2, No. 4, pp. 579–581.) "One thing," say they, addressing their fellow-citizens of the South, "is plain. It is ours to do the duties of intelligent, decided, fearless, conscientious Christian masters, and future events we may leave with Him who will direct them well." (p. 585.)

Let us remember, that if we refuse to receive these churches into full communion with ourselves, we not only exclude the masters, but along with them their

slaves; many of whom are members in full communion in the same churches with their masters, and sit down with them at the same sacramental table. It is a startling fact in the history of the Church in our country, that a Southern Aid Society has been formed in this city, (New-York,) avowedly for the purpose of supplying the deficiency of the American Home Missionary Society, who, it is said, forbear to send missionaries to our Southern and South-Western States, because they hold slaves. Can it be that they thus act because they have lost confidence in the efficacy of the Gospel, to remove and cure the sins and evils of the world, and have found an obstacle too great for it to overcome?

In reading the life of the late excellent Bishop White, of Pennsylvania, I have met with one of his letters, dated 1811, in which he says, that there then was "danger of the extinction of the profession of Christianity among a great proportion of the people of the United States." It would seem, from the course that the Home Missionary Society pursues towards them, that they are willing that this event should happen in our Southern States. What a contrast to the conduct of Christ, who commenced his public ministry, by going among "the people who sat in darkness and in the region and shadow of death," (Matt. 4: 15, 16,) and who came to save the chief of sinners. But they seem to think that our

Southern brethren are in a darkness so deep, and are sinners so great, that their condition is hopeless; or that they deserve to die in their sins, without the Gospel. Dark, however, as they may consider their state to be, it is the firm conviction of the writer of this, and he speaks from personal knowledge, that the Gospel is preached in greater, and in many instances in far greater purity, and consequently with far greater power, in the pulpits of the Southern churches generally, than it is in a large number of the Northern churches. That some of the Southern masters are cruel to their slaves he does not deny. This, however, is only admitting that there are cruel men at the South, as well as at the North. But he confidently asserts, that public sentiment in the South is strong against such cruel masters; and he believes that should such a scene occur among them as the death of "Uncle Tom," it would send a thrill of horror, and produce as strong detestation throughout our Southern as it would throughout our Northern States. Our Southern brethren complain, and they complain with truth, that "so monstrous are the misrepresentations which ignorance, malice, and fanaticism are constantly and assiduously propagating in regard to this (the slave) relation among us, that if our names were not actually written under the pictures, we should never suspect that they were intended for us." Sure we are, that withholding the Gospel



from them, and refusing to hold ecclesiastical connection with them, will produce no beneficial results, while it may be attended with most disastrous consequences.

Hitherto we have, as a nation, run a career of unexampled prosperity ; and, bound together by that glorious Constitution, which, under the guidance of Heaven, the wisdom and patriotism of our fathers formed, we have reposed in the peace and the safety of a mighty empire, while a brilliant future opens before us. Not only do our own safety and happiness require the perpetuity of our Union, but true patriots and philanthropists of every nation desire with intense anxiety the success of our attempt at self-government, and the dissolution of our Union would be a fearful blow to the cause of freedom throughout the world. To ourselves it would bring ruin, for it would at once plunge us into the horrors of a civil war. And for what ? Why, for the maintenance of an infidel abstraction, concerning the inalienable rights of man, in what they call a state of nature. Suppose, then, that the three millions of Southern slaves were all liberated at once, that the wishes of the Abolitionist were carried out to their full extent, what would be their condition ? Would we join them to drive the Southern white men from their homes, and to seize their property, and so throw them out, with their families, houseless, impoverished,

and helpless? Or are the Abolitionists of the North prepared to receive and support these three millions of slaves? The greatest injustice and cruelty that could be done to them, would be simply to carry at once into execution that for which, *not the slaves*, but the Abolitionists are contending. And shall we, for such a mad scheme, break up our confederacy and dissolve our Union? Where is the true-hearted American that advocates this? Where is the American so ungrateful to God for the blessings of the government under which he lives, and such a traitor to his country, as to consent to the breaking up of our Union, and consequently the destruction of our own happiness, and of our usefulness to the world, that now stand in bright prospect before us? And what would be the gains of such traitorous and diabolical schemes, should they prove successful? Who would be benefited by them? Not one; while all would be losers. None can predict what disasters and crimes and sorrows would follow an event so marked by folly and wickedness. All the denunciations and slanders and bitterness of Abolitionists will never benefit the slaves of the South. These are not the methods which God employs to bless men. His Church is "the light of the world," is "the salt of the earth," by which he instructs, purifies, and elevates them.

Shall we then join hands with the Abolitionist,

and disown every Christian minister, and close every church at the South, and so far as in us lies, abolish from among them the Sabbath, and the worship of God, and the sacred ordinances of our religion, and leave them, in spiritual matters, in a deeper than Egyptian darkness; and this, too, for not doing what they can not do, emancipate at once all their slaves? Our brethren of the Classis of North Carolina are the true friends of the slaves among whom they live, as well as of their masters; and are laboring, as the ministers of God, to convey to them the blessings of salvation. Christ has owned them as his ministers, and they come to us in the name of Christ, seeking to be one with us. Shall we repel them? Shall the Dutch Church, which has heretofore gloried in the reputation of its steadfastness in the truth and purity of the Gospel, and of its conservative influence amid the agitations and changes that have for years past shaken society, now abandon its conservative course, and forfeit its conservative character? No. Let us take these, our Southern brethren, by the hand, and say to them: Christian brethren, we own and we bless you as such in the name of the Lord. We hail you in your good works, and in all your efforts to instruct and enlighten and Christianize the slaves that are among you. Our arms are open to receive you; and, while we ask the blessing of God on you and your labors, we welcome you as one with us in Christ.





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## APPENDIX.

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I. SLAVERY IS ONE OF THE PENAL EFFECTS, OR A PART OF  
THE PUNISHMENT OF THE FALL AND THE  
WICKEDNESS OF MAN.\*

The present is not the original state of man. As he came fresh from his Creator's hands, he bore his Creator's likeness, and stood the head and the glory of our world, in the maturity of all his powers of mind and body—a perfectly wise, holy, and happy being. The inspired writer informs us that: "God created man in his own image: in the image of God created he him: male and female created he them."

From this high state man fell by sin. Through the temptation of Satan he deliberately broke a positive command of God, and thus brought upon himself and his descendants death and all our woes. The whole history of the fall teaches us that the government of God is administered on the principle that man's right to life and all its enjoyments depends on his perfectly obeying God's law; and that the transgression of God's law deprives him of his right

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\* See page 29.

to life and its enjoyments ; that holiness and happiness, sin and wretchedness are inseparably connected. He sinned and forfeited his right to life and the enjoyments of life. Yet God spared his life, because of his designs of mercy towards him, though he pronounced sentence on him.

The sentence on the serpent, reached, we doubt not, that old serpent, the Devil, who used that creature as his instrument, and denoted that he should sink into a lower state of degradation than that in which he was before ; that his pursuits and gratifications should be abject and base ; and that like the serpent he should be the constant and deadly enemy of man.

The sentence pronounced on the man condemned him to labor, and sorrow, and death. The curse denounced on the ground for man's sake robbed it of its fertility, and caused thorns and thistles spontaneously to grow out of it, rendering incessant toil and labor necessary that he might procure from it food for his sustenance. Here is the origin of his subjection to labor. As the punishment of his sin, God said to him : " In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground ; for out of it wast thou taken : for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return." Here too is the incidental cause of slavery. To escape the labor and toil to which all are condemned, the strong and powerful have compelled the weak and debased to labor for them.

The sentence denounced on the woman placed her in subjection to man. It was this: "Thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee." (Gen. 3: 16.) The marginal reading is: "Thy desire shall be subject to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee." The famous Jewish Rabbi, Aben Ezra, explains the term *teshooga*, as meaning *obedience*, instead of desire. The words would then be thus translated: "Thy obedience shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee." Professor Stuart, late of Andover, considers this as the correct translation of the passage (See Heb. Chrest. p. 3, Notes on No. 12): Originally woman was the equal of man. But her sin was more aggravated than his in two respects: She was first in committing it, and then tempted him to it. Her punishment was therefore greater than his. She was subjected to the pains of child-birth, and to the rule of man, while authority over her was given to him.

There can be no greater mistake than to suppose that the state of woman in other countries is the same as in ours. We must look to other parts of the world to understand the severity of the sentence which was passed upon her.

The power of the father and the husband over the daughter and the wife, in the times of the Patriarchs and under the Mosaic dispensation, was far greater than it is with us, for then fathers had the power of

selling their daughters for wives, and wives who were thus purchased were too apt to be regarded as mere servants by their husbands. (Gen. 29: 18-27. 34: 11, 12. Joshua 15: 16. 1 Sam. 18: 23-26.)

A woman in her youth who was in her father's house, could not bind herself by a vow without her father's consent. If he heard and disallowed her vow, it could not stand, and the Lord forgave her, because her father disallowed her. The same was the case with her husband. (Num. 30: 6-8.) The Hebrew women were also subject to much hardship through polygamy, concubinage, and the right of divorce, which belonged to their husband.

It is, however, in heathen and savage countries that the rule of man over the woman has been most fearfully abused. There, instead of being his beloved companion, she has been his wretched slave. No bondage among men is deeper, no sufferings are more cruel than she has received from the man who ought to have been her firmest protector, and her highest earthly joy. But we need not refer to the heathen to find instances of deep oppression and cruelty. Should every poor, heart-broken, degraded and crushed in spirit wife or daughter in the proud city of New-York, come in one body to tell of the abominable abuse of their power by drunken or dissipated husbands and fathers, the scenes of cruelty and horror that they would reveal, would, we doubt not, equal

the most atrocious cruelties practised on their slaves by any of the most cruel masters of the South. Yet where is the law that provides a punishment any way proportioned to the atrocity of the crimes of these worse than heathen men? Where are the philanthropists who are seriously laboring to protect these down-trodden women from their cruel wrongs? But shall we argue against the marriage connexion as criminal, because of the abuses to which it is subject, and endeavor to break up families, and to abolish the chief earthly blessing that has survived the ruins of the fall? Neither may we reason against the relation of master and slave, because the bad master, like the bad husband, abuses his power.

Far be it from us to teach that the relation between the husband and wife is similar to that which exists between the master and the slave, or that the subjection of the wife to the husband is of the same kind as that of the slave to the master. The marriage union makes the man and woman one—one flesh, one body, united by the closest bonds;—it ought always to be formed and cemented by love founded on the highest esteem, so that it will be the delight of each to promote the happiness of the other. We have adduced the case of the sentence pronounced on the first woman, to show that subjection to the rule of another is a part of the punishment of the fall and sin of man. This subjection is fully recognized under the Gospel

dispensation—"Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as it is fit in the Lord." (Colos. 3 : 18.) "Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the Head of the church; and he is the Saviour of the body. Therefore, as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be subject to their own husbands in every thing." (Eph. 5 : 22-24.) These last words, "in every thing," mean in every thing lawful, for neither a husband nor any earthly power has the right to command any one to do what is sinful.\* Hence the power of the husband is limited by the law of God, and he is taught that his rule should be a rule of love. It says: "Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it. . . . So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies: he that loveth his wife loveth himself. For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the church." (Eph. 5 : 28, 29.)

The influence of the Gospel and the Church of Christ in elevating the woman to her proper station, and her proper influence, is clearly shown among us. Though there are many bad husbands, and many wretched wives, this is not the general state of things,

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\* See too 1 Tim. 2 : 11, 12. Titus 2 : 5. 1 Peter 3 : 1, 6.


No where is woman more loved or honored. When adorned with intelligence, and prudence, and piety, she is the light and the joy of the household. As the wife, she is the companion and the counsellor of the man, his surest and his strongest friend, and the source of his highest earthly bliss;—or she is his darling daughter, his loveliest ornament, and the pride of his heart;—or she is his dear and affectionate sister, the companion of his boyhood, and the counsellor of his riper years;—or she is his mother, his fond and tender and venerated mother, who in the helplessness of his infancy was ever ready to sacrifice her comfort for his; his first instructor and guide in all that was good; who on the Sabbath led his tottering footsteps to the sanctuary, and instilled into his mind his earliest sentiments of piety; who with tender solicitude restrained his wayward passions, and soothed his sorrows, and ministered to his joys, and trained him for all that is high and holy. Happy is that people that has such women, and thanks to God, there are many such in our land; and they have been made such by the grace of God through the Gospel of Christ. They are crowns to their husbands. Their price is far above rubies. To all the charms of beauty, and polish and elegance and sweetness of manners, and high intellectual endowments and accomplishments, they add the higher charms of all the Christian virtues, the beauties of holiness, and the



adornments of piety. In the dark season of adversity, such a woman shines beauteous as the morning star, cheering us with the assurance that light, and peace, and day are at hand. Of all earthly objects she is the loveliest, and is but a little lower than an angel of God. And what has made her such? what has given to her this moral as well as intellectual elevation and grandeur? what has raised her so high above yonder ignorant, debased pagan woman, the slave and not the companion of her husband? We repeat it, the Gospel and the Church of Christ; and wherever these come, they come with blessings. They elevate the slave, while they humanize and sanctify his master. They, and only they, are the true remedy for the evils of slavery, and all the penal consequences of sin and the fall.

2. Our second proof that slavery is the punishment of sin is drawn from Gen. 9 : 24, 25, where the sacred historian having mentioned the wickedness of Ham, the father of Canaan, says : " And Noah awoke from his wine, and knew what his younger son had done unto him. And he said, Cursed be Canaan ; a servant of servants shall he be unto his brethren." The term "servant of servants," means a servant of the lowest and vilest kind.

The term *cursed*, (*aroor*,) here applied by Noah to Canaan, and afterwards by Joshua to the Gibeonites, (Joshua 9 : 23,) denotes one who is condemned to the



penalty of having broken God's law ; or subjected to the punishment of sin. (See Gen. 3 : 14, 17, and 4 : 11. Deut. 27 : 15-26. Gal. 3 : 10.) The particular punishment, therefore, to which Canaan was condemned, was that he should be the most debased of slaves. The term *slave*, as now distinguished by usage from the term *servant*, more exactly expresses the meaning of the original Hebrew word. Gibbon informs us that "the national appellation of the SLAVES (Sclavonians) has been degraded by chance or malice from the signification of glory to that of servitude." In his notes he informs us that "Jordan subscribes to the well-known and probable derivation" of the word slave, "from *Slava, laus, gloria*," and that "this conversion of a national into an appellative name appears to have arisen in the eighth century, in the Oriental France, where the princes and bishops were rich in Sclavonian captives.

It is scarcely necessary to observe that by Canaan is here meant the posterity of Canaan, it being very usual in prophecy to use the name of the father for his posterity. Nor is it at all necessary for us to enquire why the curse is pronounced on Canaan, when Ham his father is mentioned as having sinned ; nor whether all the descendants of Ham were included in the curse. It is sufficient for us to remark that Noah, by inspiration of God, pronounced it on Canaan as the punishment of his sin, and is one more proof

that subjection to servitude is one of the punishments which God inflicts on the sins of men.

The Canaanites were among the first to introduce idolatry, and they were idolaters of the worst kind. Their character is thus given by God himself: "Every abomination to the Lord which he hateth have they done unto their gods; for even their sons and their daughters they have burnt in the fire to their gods." (Deut. 12 : 31.) They were as licentious as they were cruel, and the very worst crimes were common among them; till at length God in his wrath gave them up to be destroyed by the Israelites. (Lev. 18 : 24, 25, and 20 : 22. Deut. 9 : 4, and 18 : 12.)

When the Israelites under Joshua had invaded Canaan, the inhabitants of Gibeon, alarmed at the overthrow of Jericho and Ai, disguised themselves, and having deceived the Israelites by pretending that they had come from a far country, persuaded Joshua and the princes of Israel to make a league with them to let them live. This league they confirmed by an oath. When three days afterwards the Israelites reached their country and discovered their deceit, they were highly displeased, and would have put them all to the sword had not Joshua and the princes resolutely interposed to prevent it. But though they spared their lives, they took them to be slaves. Joshua said to them : " Now therefore ye are cursed ; and there shall none of you be freed from being bond-

men, and hewers of wood, and drawers of water, for the house of my God. . . . And Joshua made them hewers of wood, and drawers of water, for the congregation, and for the altar of the Lord, even unto this day, in the place which he should choose." (Josh. 9 : 23, 27.) The curse of servitude denounced on the Canaanites by Noah was now literally fulfilled by this action of Joshua; and it deserves especial notice that they were made slaves in the House, at the Altar, and for the purpose of assisting in the worship of God. But would God have permitted and sanctioned this if slaveholding is in itself a sin? We think he would not.

3. The Israelites, while they kept the covenant between them and God, and truly worshipped and served him, were permitted to buy bondmen and bondwomen, that is *slaves*, of the heathen that were round about them. (Lev. 25 : 44-46.) But the Lord warned them that if they *spontatized* from him, then, as one of the punishments of their sin, they, like the heathen, should be sold into slavery: "The Lord shall bring thee into Egypt again with ships, by the way whereof I spake unto thee, Thou shalt see it no more again: and there ye shall be sold unto your enemies for bondmen and bondwomen, and no man shall buy you." (Deut. 28 : 68.)

This threatening was partially fulfilled after the Israelites became subject to kings. Towards the

close of Samuel's life they insisted that a king should be made for them like all the nations. They doubtless were impatient of the strict enforcement of the law of God by Samuel, and were anxious to have among themselves the pleasures and the splendors of idolatry and royalty. They were guilty, though not of open, yet of heart apostasy. The Lord therefore commanded Samuel to hearken to their voice in all they should say to him, "for they have not rejected thee, but they have rejected me, that I should not reign over them." The Lord through the prophet Hosea, remonstrating with Israel for their sins among them, selects this, and says to them: "I gave thee a king in mine anger, and took him away in my wrath." (Hosea 13: 11.) He commanded Samuel to protest solemnly to them, and show them the manner of the king that should rule over them; that they should be his servants, and that he would cruelly oppress them; that he would take from them their sons and daughters and degrade them to servile offices and employments, and rob them of their property and give it to others. (1 Sam. 8: 4-18.)

The threatening in Deut. was more fully accomplished in the Babylonian, and afterwards in the Roman captivity of the Jews. Josephus informs us that in the reigns of the two first Ptolemies, many of the Jews were slaves in Egypt. And when Jerusalem was taken by Titus, of the captives who were

above seventeen years he sent many bound to the works in Egypt; those under seventeen were sold; but so little care was taken of these captives that eleven thousand of them perished for want. The markets were quite overstocked with them, so that Josephus says in another place that they were sold with their wives and children at the lowest price; there being many to be sold and but few purchasers. . . . We learn from St. Jerome, that "after their last overthrow by Adrián, many thousands of them were sold, and those who could not be sold were transported into Egypt, and perished by shipwreck or famine, or were massacred by the inhabitants.

We think that we have now presented slavery and slaveholding in their true and scriptural light. Had men not apostatized from God their Creator, had they retained holiness of heart and life, and obeyed and worshipped God, they would not have known slavery. But they have sinned, and when they sink into gross impiety, and idolatry, and wickedness, as their punishment they are subjected to slavery.

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## II. ORIGIN OF SLAVERY.

When and how slavery first began are enquiries that are difficult to answer, though we know that it has existed from the remotest posterity.

It was an opinion held by the ancient Greeks, that *some men are slaves by nature*. Aristotle lays it down as an aphorism, that "nothing is more suitable to nature than that those who excel in understanding and prudence, and are able to judge of things at a distance, should rule and control those who are less happy in these advantages. On the other hand, those whose bodily strength and vigor enables them to put the commands of wiser men in execution, are by nature framed and designed for subjection and obedience. From this constitution of things the sovereign and the slave receive equal advantages; the benefits and the conveniences are alike on both sides.' This sentiment may be received as a philosopher's dream, wholly inapplicable to actual life. If superiority of intellect, prudence, and foresight entitle their possessors to enslave and rule over those who are without these endowments, then, since there are many masters who are destitute of them, and many slaves who possess them, there would be a constant change of places and conditions; the intelligent and sagacious slave would become master, and the stupid and unwise master would become the slave. Such changes could not be made without bitter strifes and endless confusion.

✓ A much more probable opinion of the origin of slavery, is that which derives it from the necessity that is laid upon man to support himself by labor.


This, as we have already seen, was a part of the punishment of his fall. The existence of civil society depends on the division of property, and the right of each lawful holder to dispose of it as he sees fit, provided he does not interfere with the rights of others, nor act against the laws of the State to which he belongs. The industrious, intelligent, and enterprising portion of society, according to the natural course of things, usually increase their substance; while the feeble-minded, unintelligent, indolent, and thriftless are pressed by want and poverty. It is highly probable that at first the rich and prosperous persuaded the poor and depressed to labor for them, on condition of their receiving suitable compensation for their labor. When this arrangement was found to be advantageous to both parties, it is supposed that "the meaner tribe were by degrees persuaded to join themselves perpetual members to the families of the greater, under these conditions, that the latter should engage to supply food and all conveniences of living, and the former should bind themselves to undertake all proper labors and employments as their patrons should direct. So that the first rise of servitude is owing to the voluntary consent of the poorer and more helpless persons, and is founded upon that common form of contract, *Do ut facias ; I promise to give you constant sustenance, upon condition you assist me with your constant work.*" (Pufendorf, Book 6, ch. 3, § 4.)



As kings and governments grew stronger in power, and especially when they became despotic, the subjection of those who were thus employed by princes, and nobles, and men of high authority and large wealth, became greater, till they were reduced to a state of entire dependence upon them, and were compelled by the civil power to yield obedience to them. But this state of things arose out of the apostasy of men from God, and their ignorance, improvidence, and wickedness.

We believe, however, that the chief source of slavery was war, and that it arose from the custom of reducing to servitude captives who were taken in war. From the manner in which Noah speaks in the curse which he denounced on Canaan, it seems that slavery had existed before the flood; and this is rendered probable by the corrupt state of the world, which was "filled with violence."

After the flood the first wars of antiquity appear to have been carried on with terrible ferocity. It was an established law among the nations, that the victor in battle had a right to take away the life of his enemy who was at his mercy; but if he spared his life he had a right to reduce him to servitude and claim him as his slave. Clarkson, in his "Treatise on the Slavery and Commerce of the Human Species," supposes that this enslaving of prisoners of war had its origin "from the days of Nimrod, who gave rise



probably to that inseparable idea of victory and servitude which we find among the nations of antiquity, and which has existed uniformly since in one country or another to the present day." He quotes Xenophon as saying that "it was a law established from time immemorial, among the nations of antiquity, to oblige those to undergo the severities of servitude whom victory had thrown into their hands." The Roman lawyer, Pomponius, deduces the word *servus*, a servant, from the verb *servo*, to save, that is in battle.

This custom probably had its origin in policy, if not in humanity. The leaders of hostile bands or armies began to perceive that their wealth and power would be greatly increased by making captives of as many as they could, instead of putting them to death, and by either employing them in their own service or selling them as slaves to others.

In the early ages, after the flood, a large portion of the human race lived in what is called the pastoral state, in which their chief wealth consisted in flocks, and herds, and slaves. They were divided into small tribes, or lived in small cities, under their respective chiefs or kings. These neighboring tribes or cities were often engaged in war, and made sudden predatory attacks upon each other.

Such attacks produced retaliation, and the injured tribes in their turn attacked and perhaps vanquished

the tribes that had injured them. But frequently they could not recover either the persons or the property which these tribes had destroyed. The only restitution which they could obtain was to keep their captives as slaves, and to compel them to labor for them as a compensation, both for sparing their lives and for the losses which they had sustained. Such, probably, was originally one chief source of slavery. It was a mitigation of the horrors of war, and substituted subjection to servitude instead of death, and this, until comparatively a very recent date, was the settled law of nations. "It was so called from the universal concurrence of nations in the custom, and was established on the principle of *the right of capture*, the victors considering the fact of their having saved the lives of the vanquished, when they could have taken them by the laws of war, as giving them a right to claim or sell them as their slaves."\*

War then has been in innumerable instances the immediate cause of slavery. But the Scriptures teach us that wars arise from the malignant passions of men: "From whence come wars and fightings among you? come they not hence, even of your lusts that war in your members?" (Jas. 4: 1.) These unholy lusts, these malignant passions would not have existed in the soul had not man apostatized

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\* See Pufendorf, book 8, ch. 6. Grotius on War and Peace, book 3, ch. 22. Vattel, book 3, ch. 8, § 152.

from God. War is not only one of the sorest calamities with which a nation can be visited, but it is also one of the punishments which God inflicts for national sins. (Jer. 15 : 2, 3, and 24 : 10. Ezek. 14 : 21.)


The mark of peculiar and of deepest reprobation is fixed by God on the sin of idolatry, or the having of any other God than himself. To the command not to make or to bow down to or serve any image or false god, is added the warning: "I the Lord thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me."

Idolatry is not only itself a grievous sin, but it is productive of every other sin. As its just punishment, God withdraws from them who are guilty of it the enlightening and purifying influences of the Holy Spirit, and gives them over to a reprobate mind ; to the grossest delusions and errors ; to the vilest passions and the darkest crimes.

The entire system of idolatry seems to have been expressly framed to incite men to war and to lasciviousness. It is a violation of the whole law of God, for it teaches men, instead of supremely loving, to hate and reject the true God, and to regard other men with enmity, or with unholy lust.

The brutal ignorance and the moral degradation into which the heathen world sunk was fearful ;

especially the subjection of woman to her brutal master, and the violation of her dearest rights were complete. Fornication, polygamy, divorce, adultery, and other forms of sensuality too abominable to be mentioned, were not only common, but they were sanctioned by their religion, and their laws, and the example of their greatest statesmen, and philosophers, and priests. The temple was a dark and deadly fountain of pollution. The home and the family received and extended this pollution. God was insulted and provoked in the one; the wife was debased and oppressed in the other. The very fountains of all true knowledge of God and holiness of heart and life were poisoned, and universal moral desolation and death were the consequence. Listen to the character which the Apostle Paul, by inspiration of the Holy Ghost, has given of the heathen world: "Even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient: being filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity; whisperers, backbiters, haters of God, despiteful, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, without understanding, covenant-breakers, without natural affection, implacable, unmerciful: who, knowing the judgment of God, that they who commit such things are worthy



of death, not only do the same, but have pleasure in them who do them." (Rom. 1 : 28-31.)

Such was the character of the heathen world as drawn by inspiration of God. They were partakers of the same nature, and made by God, "of one blood with ourselves," endowed with immortal souls, candidates for everlasting happiness or everlasting woe. But they wilfully rejected the God who made them, and turned aside to idols; they stifled the light of nature and of conscience; they cherished the vilest lusts and lived in the most criminal practices; and in his righteous judgment God used them as the instruments of inflicting on one another his punishment of their sins. Not that all were equally punished, or that the full measure of punishment was inflicted on those who suffered. It is an old remark, that God punishes in this life in various ways and different degrees, the sins of some men, to teach them that he exercises a government over them here; while he permits even the greater sins of other men to pass without present punishment, to warn men of a judgment hereafter. On some men their crimes bring poverty; on others they bring disease; on others the loss of reputation, of influence, of authority; on others imprisonment in jails and penitentiaries; on others, especially on nations, for national sins, war, with all its losses and horrors, famine, pestilence, civil dissension, the loss of freedom; and where idolatry and

polygamy shed their blighting influence, there wicked man not only enslaves and tyrannizes over degraded woman, but enslaves and tyrannizes over and sells into bondage his fellow-man. God uses wicked men to punish the crimes of other wicked men. He leaves them to the dominion of their own wicked passions, and then urged on by malice and hatred they war against and enslave each other. Where men are enlightened and virtuous; where the Gospel of Christ sheds its benign influence; where, as in Paradise, one man and one woman are joined in conjugal bliss and united in the worship of the one only true and living God; where the Bible is the guide of the family, and is revered in the sanctuary as the inspired word of God, the only perfect and infallible rule of faith and practice; there men are free; and he who gives the Gospel to the slave is his true and his best friend.

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### III. PRESENT STATE OF THE AFRICANS.

It may perhaps be objected that the heathen world has felt the influence of the progressive spirit of our age, and is not now as corrupt as it was in ancient times. It is not so with that portion of Africa from which slaves have been brought to our country.

Rev. John Leighton Wilson, who is now one of the secretaries of the Presbyterian Board of Foreign



Missions, and who during several years was a missionary in Africa, has published a very interesting statement of the Moral Condition of Western Africa, in the Southern Presbyterian Review for March, 1848. Captain Canot, too, in his "Twenty Years of an African Slaver," has not only confirmed the statements of Mr. Wilson, but has mentioned many facts to illustrate them. We borrow from them the following account of the condition of the native Africans.

Mr. Wilson says: "It is a common remark of the present day, that the heathen world is as depraved now as it was in the days of Paul. But this does not meet the case. It is worse now than it was then. There are but few modern missionaries who cannot testify to the existence of forms of human depravity among them, of which there is no mention in the Apostle's category, and of which perhaps there was no existence in his day. . . . The depth of infamy and pollution to which heathen tribes have already reduced themselves, can scarcely be conceived."

The inhabitants of Western Africa are somewhat above the *savage state*. They live in villages containing from two or three hundred to eight or ten thousand inhabitants, which are scattered over the country in every direction, at the distance of two, three, or four miles apart. Their habitations are of the meanest kind. These villages are entirely inde-




pendent of each other; while their internal government is the extreme, either of democracy or of despotism. Extreme ignorance and dissoluteness of manners prevail, producing anarchy, oppression, and constant insecurity of life.

Their religion consists of the worst forms of idolatry. They believe that there is one great Supreme Being who made all things; but they deny that he exercises any government over the affairs of men, or takes any interest in them. They attribute to him the same corrupt passions as belong to men, and think him altogether such an one as themselves.

Canot informs us that during his travels on the continent of Africa, he always found the negro a believer in some superior creature and controlling power, except the Baggers, who believe that death is total annihilation. The Mandingoes and Fullahs are Mahometan. The other tribes are heathen, who worship spirits, some of whom are good and some evil, and who they believe control the affairs of men. The evil spirits are supposed to cause war, famine, drought, pestilence, and all manner of calamity to which men are subject. They are therefore more particular about worshipping them than the good spirits, through fear of provoking their displeasure and thereby bringing upon themselves evil.

Canot gives an account of a yearly sacrifice of human beings by the king of Dahomey, which he



was invited to attend. "The sacrifice was delayed on account of the scarcity of victims, though orders had been given to storm a neighboring tribe to make up three hundred slaves for the festival." In this bloody tragedy, which lasted five days, women were the principal actors. On the first day they dragged with hellish ferocity and delight, fifty captives from the place of their confinement, and slaughtered them in the most brutal manner, and when these bloody rites were over they were dismissed, "reeking with rum and blood." During the whole of the sacrifice the most shocking atrocities were committed. He gives another account of an annual sacrifice of a young woman, which he witnessed at Lagos; the design of which was to appease a demon or evil spirit. The whole business was conducted in a way intended to strike with awe and terror the ignorant Africans, while the king and the Juju priest, who were the principal actors in this scene of cruelty and blood, were guilty of consummate artifice and deception.

Their religion sheds no purifying or elevating influences over their minds, but cherishes and strengthens every impure and debased passion. Mr. Wilson having informed us that they worship devils, says: "If it be true, and it undoubtedly is, that our moral characters constantly assimilate to the character of the Being we worship, it follows as a necessary consequence, that African character has been approxi-

mating for centuries to a model the most hideously immoral and depraved the human imagination can conceive. And here is at once the secret cause of all that cunning, duplicity, and cruelty that have ever characterized this people. The lineaments of the divine image have been effectually effaced from their hearts, whilst those of the spirits of the infernal pit have been drawn with too bold a hand to be mistaken or misapprehended."

Another form of their religion is *Fetichism*. A *fetich*, which is also called a *grègree*, or a *jeu jeu*, is a piece of wood, or the horn of a goat, or the hoof of an antelope, or a piece of metal, or of ivory, which has been consecrated by a native priest. This is worn about the person, or set up in some convenient place; and the greatest confidence is placed in its power to avert evil or to procure good. If, however, evil overtakes any of them, their fetiches that they then have are thrown away as bad, but their confidence in the efficacy of fetiches is not at all impaired, and they forthwith procure new ones.

They are firm believers in Witchcraft; and the powers which are ascribed to one who is supposed to possess it fall little short of omnipotence. "He exercises unlimited control, not only over the lives and destiny of his fellow men, but over the wild beasts of the woods, over the sea and dry land, and over all the elements of nature. There is nothing too hard for his

machinations. Sickness, poverty, insanity, and almost every evil incident to human life, are ascribed to witchcraft." The imputation of possessing this art is greatly dreaded, since it affixes a serious stigma to the man's character, and yet any man is liable to be charged with it. Every death among them is ascribed to it—consequently some one must be guilty of the wicked deed; and a brother, a sister, a father, and even a mother may be accused, and woe to him that is accused, for he will be punished with death.


With the exception of those who have been taught by the Missionaries on the coast, they have no knowledge of books; but are sunk in the grossest ignorance.

Polygamy prevails among them, and the importance of a man in society is determined by the number of his wives. Every one, therefore, takes to himself as many as he can, without any affection for them, or regard to their quiet or comfort or support, while he tyrannizes over them, and by his superior strength, compels them to obey. "Perhaps the strongest detestation that ever occupies the heart of an African woman is towards the companion of her bosom and the father of her children. . . . Strifes, jealousies and endless bickerings prevail among the wives; while conjugal fidelity is unknown," and chastity is so far from being regarded as a virtue, that they have no term by which to express it. Envy, jealousy, revenge, deception, insincerity, and the most indis-

criminate profligacy have the countenance of universal practice.

Selfishness, absolute and lawless selfishness, is the master passion of their hearts;—a selfishness which regards neither justice, nor humanity, nor decency, nor kindred, nor friendship;—a selfishness which is universal, and which produces falsehood, theft, fraud, drunkenness, gluttony, and debauchery. There is no confidence between man and man. Every man must be the sole guardian of his own rights, his own interest and property, and defend them against the evil designs of all around him.

Added to all these other sources of degradation and misery is the slave trade, especially the foreign slave trade, which is supposed to have existed for ages among them, but has been carried on with greatly increased activity (until within about fifty years) for the last previous three hundred years. Canot informs us that the practice of exchanging their slaves for foreign merchandize is so established among them, that "*man, in truth, has become the coin of Africa and the legal tender of a brutal trade.*" This is without a parallel, we believe, in the history of any other people, and shows the deep degradation to which they have sunk. They have not only enslaved to themselves their own countrymen and kindred, and sold them as slaves to foreigners, but they welcome the slave trader to their shores, and in ex-



change for his cottons, rum, tobacco, muskets, powder, trinkets, and other such commodities, *they pay him their own countrymen*, perhaps their nearest neighbors and kinsmen, whom they have inhumanly captured for this very purpose. They are indeed without natural affection, implacable, unmerciful. A mother, for rum or for a few yards of cloth, will sell her child, and a husband will sell his wife. The inhabitants of one village, without having received any provocation, will attack at midnight the sleeping inhabitants of a neighboring village, and sell into slavery all whom they can capture, while they murder every one who resists them and destroy the village. Canot says that there were two towns at Digby governed by cousins, who had always lived in harmony. He established a slave factory in the town of the younger cousin. This offended the elder and made the two bitter enemies. "They immediately put their towns in a state of defence, and kept sentinels watching by day and by night. About four months afterwards he visited the settlement of the elder and offended cousin, and was received with the greatest joy by him and his town, which immediately became a scene of unbounded merriment. Powder was burnt without stint; gallons of rum were distributed to both sexes, and dancing, smoking, and carousing continued till long after midnight, when all stole off to maudlin sleep." About three o'clock in the morning

the sudden screams of women and children and volleys of musketry aroused him. The town was attacked by the younger cousin, aided by *bushmen*, headed by a ferocious scoundrel, who, with his chiefs, were cannibals, "and never trod the war path without a pledge to return laden with human flesh to gorge their households." These savages rushed with shouts through the town, murdering every one whom they encountered. After the first massacre was ended and the day had begun, they assembled around their leader at the *Palaver House*, and there was scarcely one of them who did not bring the body of some maimed and bleeding victim, who were tumbled on a heap in the centre. Immediately after, "a procession of women, whose naked limbs were smeared with chalk and ochre, poured into the Palaver House to join the beastly rites, each armed with a knife and bearing in her hand some cannibal trophy. Then came the refreshment, in the shape of rum, powder, and blood, which was quaffed by the brutes till they reeled off with linked hands in a wild dance around the pile of victims. As the women leaped and sang, the men applauded and encouraged." I forbear to transcribe his account of the revolting scene of lasciviousness and cruelty which followed.\* Clarkson, in his celebrated essay "On the Slavery and Commerce of the Human Species,"† confirms the above state-

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\* See Canot, ch. 61.

† Part 2, ch. 8.

ment of the savage ferocity of their contests, when one town attacks another for the sake of procuring slaves.

They seem incapable of forming themselves into extended political combinations, and this arises from the perpetual jealousies and strifes which exist among them, and their want of confidence in the integrity and ability of each other. "The only point in which the people of any one village are ever heartily united among themselves, is their extreme hatred to their nearest neighbors." They are unable "to see that the welfare of each individual is most effectually promoted by securing the rights and interests of the whole. As a general thing, they live together in disorderly masses, without law, without legislation, without courts of justice, and without any kind of security either of person or property." Where they are ruled by despotic chiefs, their lives and property are absolutely at the disposal of these chiefs; and the deeds of barbarous cruelty that are constantly perpetrated by their commands are too revolting to be recited.\* The democratic form is no better. Universally ignorant, without any moral restraint, and ruled by the worst passions whose sway is uncontrolled, they know not what good government is; and it is doubtful whether a man in that country ever com-

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\* See article "Dahomey," in Brewster's Edinburgh Encyclopedia.



poses himself to sleep at night with a feeling of entire security. Contemplated from any point of view, this portion of Africa "presents little else to the eye of humanity than one vast continent of sin, misery and superstition."

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#### IV. ABOLITIONISTS.

It is the custom of Abolitionists to represent the natives of Africa who were brought as slaves to our country, as a harmless and innocent race of sufferers, and our countrymen who now hold slaves as men-stealers; and astonishment has been expressed that the people of the United States have become "so lost to patriotism, philanthropy, and religion, as to acquiesce in the piratical conduct of a handful of their number, who have seized upon one-seventh of the men, women, and children of the land, and doomed them to perpetual, unrequited, brutal servitude, ignorance, and heathenism."\*

Hard words these, and terrible if true. Let us examine them a little.


It is not true that the Africans who were brought to this country were piratically stolen by their present owners or their fathers. They were enslaved and sold by their own countrymen.

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\* Thirteenth Annual Report of the Am. and For. Anti-Slavery Society.


Nor were the slaves who were brought to this country so unoffending as they are represented to have been. Like their countrymen in Africa, they were debased, ignorant, and cruel idolaters. They approved of, and as far as they were able, practised the capturing and enslaving of their countrymen; and if they did not capture and sell their captors and enslavers, it was not for any want of will to do so, but for want of power. The character and conduct of both the captors and captives among these Africans were so debased, and they so closely resembled the ancient Canaanites, that the wonder is that God did not doom them to extermination. Instead of this he permitted them, as the instruments by whom he punished their crimes, to enslave and sell each other.

The writer has just been reading a letter by John S. Kitchen, assistant-surgeon in the U. S. ship *St. Louis*, addressed to a gentleman in Philadelphia, published in the *Philadelphia Inquirer*, and republished from it in the *New-York Spectator* of June 5, 1856, in which he says: "After we left Cape Palmas we cruised in the Gulf of Guinea, *long celebrated as the very source of the slave trade, and even now notorious for the tenacity with which the inhabitants cling to the remains of the traffic.*" Again he says: "Many a dark tale could be told of the horrors of the lagoons of the Congo, and *it will be many a long day before the struggling remains of the slave trade disappear from its shores.*" What?



when there are American and English ships of war ready to aid those nations, should they wish to destroy the slave trade from among them? If traders for buying our sons and daughters should lie off our coasts, would we ask for a vessel of war to aid us in repelling them? Alas! the wretched Africans seek to enslave each other, and welcome the slave trader among them.

It is not true that our countrymen who now hold slaves are guilty of "piratical conduct" in "seizing" upon them. "The crime of piracy, or robbery and depredation upon the high seas," says Blackstone, "is an offence against the universal law of society; a pirate being, according to Sir Edward Coke, *hostis humani generis*," an enemy of the human race. It will not be pretended that our countrymen who hold slaves actually stole them upon the high seas. We suppose that what is meant, is that their holding them is as criminal as if they had done this, and that they are "men-stealers," who deserve to be punished as if they were pirates. But according to Blackstone, a pirate "has renounced all the benefits of society and government, and has reduced himself afresh to the savage state of nature, by declaring war against all mankind," and therefore, "all mankind must declare war against him, &c." That is, Southern slaveholders are *outlaws*, because they have *piratically seized upon their slaves!*



But this is not true. Nor can it be proved even by implication, under the pretext that their fathers were men-stealers, and that they by inheriting them have given their assent to what their fathers did. The slave trade, abominable as it was, was yet a *legal traffic* until the beginning of the present century. It was only in the year 1807 that the British Parliament, after a most determined struggle of near twenty years against it, passed a law for the abolition of this trade. In the Convention to frame the present Constitution of the United States, the first committee to whom the subject of slavery was referred, and "*the majority of which were from what are strong anti-slavery States*," reported against any future prohibition of the African slave trade, but were willing to *legalize it perpetually*." A second committee, "*a majority of which were from slave States, (then and now,)*" reported the clause, with authority to Congress to *prohibit* the slave trade after the year 1800. . . . This section was afterwards modified and adopted as it now exists in the Constitution, extending the time before which Congress could not prohibit the trade until 1808. Massachusetts, New-Hampshire, and Connecticut, *free States*, and Maryland, North and South Carolina, slave States, *voting for the extension*; New-Jersey and Pennsylvania, free States, and Delaware and Virginia, slave States, voting against it." There were at the time of the Convention about seven hundred thou-

sand slaves in our country. The New-York Tribune remarks on the above facts as follows: "Had the New-England States voted against the extension, the slave trade would have been abolished eight years earlier, preventing the importation of more than a hundred thousand into this country, and there would have been at the present time a less number of slaves in the United States by at least three hundred thousand."\*

Thus the legality of the slave trade was admitted and confirmed by the Convention that formed the Constitution, which is the supreme law of our country, and which, while by Art. 1, Sec. 9, it gave power to Congress to abolish the slave trade, by Art. 4, Sec. 2, confirmed the right of owners to their slaves under the law of the State in which they reside. If, then, the accusation of the Abolitionists against the Southern slaveholders is true, not only the Puritan fathers and patriots of New-England, who aided to achieve our Revolution, and their compatriots of other States were guilty of "piratical conduct," but the very Constitution of our country legalizes "piratical conduct" and "man stealing." Such are the accusations which they bring against some of the purest and the most illustrious patriots and statesmen that have ever adorned the history of a nation ;

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\* Adams South Side View of Slavery.

and a Constitution framed by their wisdom, and which should be our pride and boast.

A Southern statesman of high reputation, the late Hon. James McDowell, of Virginia; has said, that every one of the original thirteen States, at some stage of their career, have given the sanction of law to the very same slavery which now exists at the South; . . . that "notwithstanding the bounties both of land and money with which it was the policy of some of your Northern Legislatures, at an early day, to encourage the direct importation of the slave from Africa, and notwithstanding the mercantile activity and the high profits upon a large scale, which this importation is believed to have excited and rewarded, still the physical nature of the slave was such that he withered away under the rigors of your Northern climate, and soon dropped from your hands, a profitless and troublesome possession. . . . Whatever the motives which prevailed in Northern emancipation, it is not to be forgotten that the South was a powerful auxiliary in having it accomplished. She was always ready to receive the slaves which their Northern owners found it profitable or convenient to dispose of; thus affording at that day, through her territories, the relief in this respect, which at this day has been denied so strenuously to herself; and thus stimulating emancipation in the North, by making it a source of trade and direct pecuniary gain. Your

incumbering and your profitless thousands of slaves were thrown off upon her, and the vast sums of money which were given in exchange, taken back to your own homesteads, have long since been incorporated with that capital whose wonder-working progress and achievements attracted to your enterprise the homage of universal admiration, and filled your whole land with monuments of science, and art, and philanthropy, and religion.”\*

If all who hold slaves are men-stealers, then those Northern merchants who imported and all those Northern men who traded in and bought and sold slaves were men-stealers, and those Legislatures, who by “bounties” encouraged the slave trade, abetted man-stealing; and if the title of the Southern slaveholders whose fathers bought from Northern men their slaves, and so “received stolen goods, knowing them to have been stolen, is simply one of *larceny*, no matter how many degrees removed, and can never, by long continuance nor by human laws, be made right;” and if we must break church-fellowship with all who hold slaves, for this reason, then a new field of agitation and reform is opened for our Northern churches. To be consistent and act on principle, we must refuse church-fellowship with all who hold property that was acquired by the sale of slaves, no matter how

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\* Lecture in Philadelphia in 1851.

long since it was obtained, since "their title is simply one of larceny." Let us deal fairly with both, and say to the Southerner, Emancipate at once your slaves; and to the Northerner, and especially to the Abolitionist, Relinquish at once all the property which you hold which originally was acquired by trafficking in slaves. No matter how far back the title may go, it was originally acquired by receiving what was stolen, or money paid for what was stolen, and so "is simply one of larceny." The reasoning, we think, is as good in the one case as in the other; but if it should be thoroughly carried out in action, it would shake society to its foundation. It is a sound principle of law, that "what ought not at first to have been done, yet after it has been done and confirmed by the highest Legislative and judicial authority, must be considered valid and established;" otherwise society would be constantly convulsed by civil contests.

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#### V. IMMEDIATE EMANCIPATION.

But it is asserted that slaveholding ought, as a heinous sin, to be immediately abandoned, and of course that all the slaves in our land ought to be at once emancipated.

That slaveholding is not a sin we have already proved. If, however, the Abolitionist sincerely thinks



it is a sin, then he does his duty by not holding slaves. But he has no right to make his conscience, or prejudices or opinions the standard of duty to all other men; especially when they are as conscientious as he is, and have diligently and even prayerfully sought that their consciences might be enlightened on the subject, and are compelled by their best judgment to believe that he is in serious error. Abolitionists have yet to learn that their sayings are not infallibly nor self-evidently true;—that other men, and even slaveholders, have consciences, and rights of conscience which even abolitionists are bound to respect.

Slaveholders in the south and south-west have a legal right to their slaves. The Law of God, the constitution of our country, and the laws of the respective States in which they reside, recognize, assert and guard their right. Will the abolitionist say that the Fourth and the Tenth Commandments of God's Law are unrighteous? Will he say that the Constitution of the Country and the Law of a State ought to be resisted, even by force, because they sanction slavery, and so become a preacher of sedition and treason?

The nature and design of our government takes from the inhabitants of one State the right of interfering in the local affairs of another State. These are subject exclusively to the jurisdiction of each particular State. What relates to the general interest of the whole nation is assigned to the General Government,

whose powers are defined and limited by the Constitution, and our Union under the Constitution makes us **ONE NATION**. An attempt to break asunder the ties that bind us together as one nation is **HIGH TREASON**, and every American who loves his country will regard it with detestation. But each separate State has also its separate State Government, and "the powers not delegated to the United States by the Constitution, nor prohibited by it to the States, are reserved to the States respectively or to the people." The Constitution has not "delegated to the United States" the power to abolish slavery: nor has it either prohibited or delegated to the States the power to abolish or retain it, but has left the whole matter to the legal jurisdiction of the separate States.

"In Pennsylvania, slavery was abolished in 1780. In New-Jersey it was provisionally abolished in 1784—all children born of a slave after 1804 were made free in 1820. In Massachusetts it was declared after the revolution, that slavery was virtually abolished by their Constitution (1780). In 1784 and 1797, Connecticut provided for a gradual extinction of slavery. In Rhode Island, after 1784, no person could be *born* a slave. The ordinance of 1787 forbid slavery in the Territory north-west of the Ohio, but the census shows that the injunction was disobeyed. The Constitutions of Vermont and New-Hampshire, respectively, abolished slavery. In New-York it was pro-

visionally abolished in 1799, twenty-eight years ownership being allowed in slaves born after that date, and in 1817, it was enacted that slavery was not to exist after ten years or 1827.\*"

The principle has heretofore been respected and acted on that each state is entirely independent of every other State in relation to this matter as well as to others of a merely local nature. If slaveholding is a sin, no non-slaveholding State is accountable for it. The inhabitants of Massachusetts are not accountable for the slaveholding of the inhabitants of South Carolina, or at the most, the only possible extent to which they can be considered accountable is that they are co-parties in a General Government which recognizes the right of individuals to hold slaves, when that right is given to them by the laws of the State in which they reside. But the establishment of the government did not originate slavery. It existed among the States before their confederacy. Whether it should be permitted to exist was not even debated by the framers of our Constitution, when they formed that sacred compact which has made us the freest, and one of the greatest and most prosperous of the nations on the earth. Let us be thankful for the inestimable blessings that this constitution secures to us; and let us beware how for evils that do not im-

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\* Compendium of Seventh Census of the U. S., p. 84.

mediately affect ourselves, and the imaginary sins of others, we bring upon ourselves the guilt of seditious stirrers up of civil strife, if not of foul treason against the noblest government, with the exception of the Theocracy of Israel, that has ever blessed mankind.

By the census of 1850, the slave population in the United States amounted to 3,204,818, while the white population in the slaveholding states was 6,222,418. The abolitionists insist that all these three millions of southern slaves ought at once to be emancipated. We reply, that at one time, the laws of some of the slaveholding States did permit emancipation. But though the slaves were considerably elevated in their intellectual and religious character above their kindred in Africa, they showed themselves to be wholly unworthy to be trusted with freedom. They conducted so as to compel the States to repeal the laws that permitted their emancipation and enact other laws forbidding it, that the white population might enjoy security in their own persons and property, and the blacks be kept from the degradation to which the abuse of their freedom subjected them; for when they were made free, they only abused their freedom and sank deeper in laziness and crime.

We reply again:—that if these three millions of slaves were all emancipated at once, the free States of the Confederacy would most probably, if not certainly,

immediately enact laws prohibiting their coming and settling with them, and so would throw them all upon the slave States. The necessary consequence of this would be the introduction of a state of affairs disastrous to the white inhabitants, and ruinous to the blacks. Let us suppose that the emancipated slaves of the south were placed in the same situation as the free colored people are at the north; that is, that they had become free men without the privileges of free-men—would this be a rich boon to them? Though free at the north, they are shut out completely from social intercourse with us on terms of equality. What white families exchange visits with them, or admit them as guests to their tables? What white families intermarry with them and court their relationship? In what houses of worship, or in what houses of amusement do they mingle together, and sit side by side with the whites, on terms of equality? They are shut out from the privileges of our colleges and higher schools of learning. In many of our free States they are excluded not only from holding civil offices, but even from voting for the white men who shall rule over them. They are especially excluded from all high offices of trust and honor. Their voice is never heard in the halls of legislation, or in the courts of justice. They hold no military offices, and our sailors, and soldiers, and common day workmen would disdain to submit to them.



Thus, though the colored people at the North are free, they are degraded and kept destitute of many of the strongest motives and excitements that affect the minds of men; that awaken self-respect and urge them to effort to elevate themselves. In theory it is asserted that all men are by nature free and equal. But should the free colored people presume on our honesty and sincerity in that profession, and claim an equality of office, and rights, and privileges; should they set themselves up for members of the Legislature, or Congress, or for governors, or judges, or for even the lowest offices, they would soon be most contumeliously repelled.

✓ They exist in peace among us because they are content to remain in a state of inferiority and subordination; while *the smallness of their numbers*, compared with that of the white inhabitants, prevents much of the evil which we might expect if they were more numerous.\* This state of inferiority and degradation must exist until they are admitted to an equality of social intercourse and social rights, which cannot be

✓ \* According to the census of 1850, the whole number of the free colored population of the United States was 484,495;—of these, 288,187 reside in the slave States, 196,016 in the free States, and 292 in the Territories. In the whole of New-England there are 28,021, and in the remaining ten free States there are 172,995. In Maryland, there are 74,723; in Virginia, 54,333; and in North Carolina, 27,463. There are in the slaveholding States, 8,222,418 whites, and 8,442,500 blacks; and in the free States, 13,380,650 whites, and 196,808 blacks, or 13,184,842 whites more than blacks; while in the slave States there are only 2,779,918 whites more than blacks.

until they are admitted to intermarriage with the whites. When we at the north are prepared for these things and when they actually exist among us, we may then with a better face complain of our southern brethren.

But the condition of the South with relation to their colored population is very different from ours. The immediate liberation of their three millions of slaves would necessitate a change of government. For men to be capable of self-government, and of maintaining a flourishing republican commonwealth, they must be enlightened and virtuous; they must be bound together by mutual confidence in each other's high integrity and love of their common country. Where the masses of the community are ignorant, irreligious, selfish, immoral, and addicted to low pursuits and pleasures, there can be no mutual confidence, and men are compelled to fly to the strong arm of a despot to protect them from each other. Nor are intelligence, civilization, and improvements in the arts and sciences sufficient alone to make men free; for if they were, France, and Italy, and Germany would be free. Immorality and a false or no religion debase men and unfit them for freedom. Subjection to servitude is the penalty which the God of the Universe has annexed to rebellion against himself; to the having of other gods beside Him, and to the rejection of his offered mercy and grace through

Christ, and we shall attempt in vain to annul this penalty. Both the moral and the physical laws by which the government of the Universe is conducted, are established by that great and Holy God who created the Universe, and the one operates as surely as the other. If a man cannot "take fire into his bosom and not be burned," neither can a man nor a nation forsake the true God, and turn atheists or idolaters, and not be enslaved to despots or to masters. The true God must be acknowledged and worshipped; he must be feared, and his law must be obeyed. Men must be intelligent and conscientious Christians, in order that they may enjoy the blessings of civil freedom in their full extent, for since *the very essence of civil liberty is government by just law*, and since God has commanded us to be subject to the government and to obey its laws *for conscience sake*, it enters into the religion of every sincere Christian to obey the government and its laws, and where a community is Christian it will support government and obey law for conscience sake.

Though the condition of the slaves of the South has been greatly improved above that of their countrymen in Africa, they are yet wholly unfit for self-government. Should they be immediately set free, a tremendous mass of ignorance and lawlessness would at once be thrown in the midst of our Southern brethren, and bitter hatred and resentment would




spring up between the two races. Mutual provocations, and insults, and injuries would be the consequence, rendering a strong government and strong laws necessary to repress violence and wrong. Probably a war between them would be the consequence, ending in the overthrow and subjection of the blacks to a severer bondage than the present.

The friend of the slaves will seek their intellectual and especially their religious elevation of character, and will hail with joy every attempt at this. This, however, can be effected only through the instrumentality of the *glorious Gospel of the blessed God*, preached to the slaves by the ambassadors of Christ. He has promised that he will be with them always, to the end of the world; and the faithful preaching of "Christ crucified," will, through the accompanying power and blessing of the Holy Spirit, elevate the slave and fit him to be free.

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#### VI. CHARACTER OF SLAVEHOLDERS.


The question of abolitionism bears on the character and conduct of our white Southern brethren as well as on the condition of their slaves. From the denunciations and clamors against them we should suppose that the masters, as a whole, are monsters of injustice and cruelty, and that the slaves, as a whole, are an unoffending, helpless race of sufferers. Nothing can



be more false. There are at the South cruel and oppressive masters, who wantonly and wickedly abuse their power; and there are too, wicked slaves, who are guilty of crimes that provoke the anger and even the abuse of power of other masters, who, but for their crimes, would have been kind. We are far from excusing oppression, injustice, and violence in any man under any provocation. There are wicked, and violent, and cruel men wherever men are found, and power when placed in the hands of such men will be abused. But we believe that in the South cruel and oppressive masters are the exceptions, and that in the general, the Southern masters are humane and kind in their treatment of their slaves. We should remember that they profess the same religion as ourselves, have the same Bible, keep the same Sabbath, worship the same God, and hear the same Gospel, and therefore we may believe that they have the same humane feelings, and act from the same Christian principles as we hope influence us.

The following extract from "The Narrative of the State of Religion, by the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church, (O. S.,) met at Nashville, Tennessee, May, 1855, and addressed to the Churches under their care," shows that they are not unmindful of their spiritual welfare. They say:


"The prosperity granted our Church has diversified and increased the duties of our Church. E



ing from the Lakes to the Gulf of Mexico, and from the Atlantic to the western ocean, in a large portion of our territory slavery exists. Nor has that people whom the Presbyterian Church found here in a state of bondage, been contemned for their degradation, nor neglected as to their spiritual interests. With scarcely an exception, the reports from Presbyteries of the South speak in Christian tenderness of this lowly, but far from undeserving class of our population, and of the efforts every where put forth to improve their social and spiritual condition.

"In few, if any of our Southern States, are laws enforced forbidding that slaves be taught to read. Usually, as far as among any other class, Sabbath Schools are sustained for their instruction. In cities and larger towns the slaves have, and they prefer to have, their own churches. In rural districts and villages our pastors devote a part of every Sabbath to their special instruction; while on extended plantations every facility is offered for the preaching of the Gospel and other methods of religious teaching.

"And we believe ourselves to be speaking the language of sober truth, when we say there are in our Southern churches thousands of slave owners, whose desire and effort is to prepare those whom an inscrutable Providence has cast upon their care, for a state of liberty and self-control which they cannot yet enjoy, and whose fervent prayer is that God would



hasten the day of safe and salutary freedom to men of every clime."

We have not access to the narrative of the state of religion among other evangelical denominations of Christians in the South, but we do know that they all are promoting the religious welfare of the slaves, and we doubt not would make statements similar to those made by the Presbyterian General Assembly.\*

It becomes us at the North to beware of bringing false accusations against our Southern countrymen, and it especially becomes ministers of religion to guard against making such statements in the pulpit, and on the Sabbath. Their commission is to preach the Gospel, and happy will it be for them, and for the people of their charge, if they faithfully fulfil that commission. It is to be hoped that they will give a candid perusal to such writings as "The South Side View of Slavery, by Nehemiah Adams, D. D.," and the "Ten Letters on the Subject of Slavery, by N. L. Rice, D. D." A minister of the Gospel should earnestly desire to be a preacher of truth and righteousness only, and in order to his being such, he should as far as possible guard against every misstatement in relation to facts, or doctrines, or duties. Misrepresentation, wrathful denunciations, and the assertion of unscriptural principles of action, only

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\* See Biblical Repertory and Princeton Review for October 1845, vol. 17, p. 591.

injure the cause they were intended to serve. As a people we have loudly boasted of our rights—of natural and inalienable rights—but, alas! we have thought and said too little of our *duties*. Rights and duties are reciprocal. Too many base their theories of rights on a fiction that man is born out of society, independent of it, and not accountable to it, and assert that he therefore has a natural and inalienable right to freedom above all the laws of society. A heathen writer has taught us better than this. He says: "*Jus hominum quod situm est in generis humani societate,*" the right of men is founded in the social union of men.\* The state or condition of a man in civil society is determined by his birth and the condition of his parents, especially of his mother. Civil society is the appointment of God in which he designs men to live. "Let every soul be subject to the higher powers. For there is no power but of God. The powers that be are ordained of God." The law of the land does not for a moment admit the fiction that men are born or created out of society, and free from its rule. It reaches to the yet unborn infant; it throws its protecting arm around our persons, and property, and legal rights, from our birth to our death.

It is our boast that we, as a people, make the laws

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\* Cicero, Tus. Ques., Lib, 1, 26.


by which we are governed. Let us remember that this lays us under the stronger obligation to obey them, and not only to obey them ourselves, but to insist that our magistrates shall enforce them, and so protect the law-abiding portion from the law-breaking portion of the community. Contempt for law, and licentiousness of conduct are fatal to civil liberty. That cannot dwell with lawless violence. The deliberate violation or disregard of one great and just law will produce indifference to all law, and the attempt by private individuals or societies of such individuals to force their sentiments and views by violence, is a high handed procedure, which may lead to civil war, to revolution and anarchy, and possibly to the loss of our civil freedom.

The Constitution of our country, which is our supreme law, leaves the whole subject of slavery with each of the separate States. Let us leave it where that leaves it. Especially let Ministers of the Gospel remember that they are peculiarly bound by their sacred calling to show obedience to the laws and the powers that be, and let them in this respect, instead of following atheistical or infidel demagogues, follow Christ and his Apostles. Let us remember that the providence and purposes of God are now very imperfectly understood by us, and that though to us obscure and perplexed, they are just and right. Why he has permitted the slave trade to exist, and why degraded

and savage Africans were bought as slaves by our forefathers and so mingled with us, we cannot tell. But already he has brought great good out of this evil. The condition of the slaves is far better than that of the Africans from among whom they have been brought. Instead of debased savages, they are, to a considerable extent, civilized, enlightened and christianized. Their physical condition is greatly improved. "Whoever else may writhe and groan under want or debt, the slave feels neither and fears neither, he works on, sleeps on, whistles on (for he is the merriest of all mortals) just as if such things had no existence amongst the troubles of life." (M'Dowell) In many instances, he is the sincere though humble christian.

But more than this, from among these slaves many have gone back to the land from which they were brought, and on the shores of western Africa, we behold—what had never been seen there before—a Christian Commonwealth—modelled after our own, having the same language and customs, blessed with churches and schools, and bibles and sabbaths, flourishing in commerce and the arts; and destined, we hope and believe, to christianize and civilize Africa. The blessing of God rest upon that commonwealth.

Instead of rejecting and refusing to hold communion with those christian churches and those holy and devoted ministers of the gospel, through whose instru-




mentality many of these Liberians were converted to God, and who are laboring faithfully to promote the temporal as well as the spiritual and eternal welfare of the slaves among whom they dwell, let us rather aid and cheer them in their heavenly work by our benedictions and our prayers. Let us remember that they at least are free from oppressing their slaves; that cruelty and impurity are no more tolerated in southern than in northern churches: and let us beware lest, like "the accuser of our brethren," (Rev. 12: 10.) we should be guilty of charging them with crimes of which they are innocent, and so bring guilt on our own souls, and give occasion to the enemies of Christ to blaspheme.

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## VII. CONCLUSION.

Two replies, in pamphlet form, have been published to the Argument of "Slaveholding not Sinful." The one by John Van Dyke, Esq. To this my son, Henry K. How, replied in, it is said, an ably written pamphlet, entitled (as was Mr. Van Dyke's) "Slaveholding not Sinful." The other reply is by Rev. H. D. Garse, entitled "Bible Slaveholding not Sinful." I shall briefly notice a part of this reply.

Mr. Garse says: "The argument of Dr. How is inconclusive to not a few minds, and for this chief





reason, namely: the indefiniteness of its terms." The terms to which he refers are "slaveholding" and "slavery." (p. 5.) He "invites" us to make our "demonstration of the Bible's approval of slavery intelligible, by incorporating in it the Bible's definition of a slave. We make the request, but it will not soon be granted. Not because such a definition is hard to give; for we hold that when the Bible teaches morals, it teaches them clearly, but it would explode his argument like a bomb-shell. No system of modern slavery could stand before it for a moment." (p. 7.)

Well, what is "the Bible's definition of a slave"? We had hoped that Mr. Ganse had been more fortunate than ourselves, and had found such a definition comprised in few and exact words that he would give us. But he gives no such definition. He says, however, "such a definition we propose to offer." (p. 8.) So after all we must have Mr. Ganse's definition, and not the Bible's. Instead of giving the definition of slaveholding as recognized in the Word of God, he says: "Our information must be derived from one of two sources," either an "organic law of slavery," or such particular examples of slaveholding as the Bible contains. He explicitly asserts that *the Bible does not furnish any such law.* (p. 8.) He says: "The Bible then contains no organic law of slavery, and the only warrant that slavery can claim from it is that of par-

ticular examples. For we grant very cheerfully all that the argument before us can be thought to prove, namely, that slavery of some sort is countenanced in the Bible; under the Old Testament *by express law establishing and defining a system of slaveholding*, and under the New by such general injunctions to masters and slaves as at least tolerated the relation." (p. 12.) We are at a loss to understand what the author means by first asserting that the Bible contains "*no organic law of slavery*," and then that it does contain an "*express law establishing and defining a system of slaveholding*." His reply, however, we suppose will be found on p. 9, where he says that "the Mosaic law of slavery was an organic law for the economy to which it belonged, but no man now makes the code of Moses the rule of his slaveholding." (p. 9.) With all due deference we must dissent from this assertion. The Law of Ten Commands given on Sinai to the Israelites, includes the relation of master and slave in both the Fourth and the Tenth Commandments, and is of perpetual and universal obligation. To deny this is to contradict Christ himself. (Matt. 5: 17-19.) This law includes too the law of love: "thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself," showing that a man may hold a slave in consistency with it.

But Mr. Ganse boldly asserts that the terms "man-servant" and "maid-servant in the Decalogue," can-

not be shown by their etymology or their usage to contain the idea of slavery. (p. 9.) He says that he asserts and stands ready to prove this. Here again we are put off with mere assertion without proof. He asserts that "domestics, of whatever name, are the man-servants and the maid-servants intended in the Decalogue." (p. 11.) Suppose then that we admit that such domestics as we have in the free States are intended, and that the law means "thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's man domestic or hired servant or maid hired servant," we ask what is the meaning or correct application of the law? It evidently forbids the coveting of what *belongs* to our neighbor, or of what he has a legal right to possess and hold. But he has no such right in a hired man-servant, and to give such a meaning to the commandment is in our opinion to trifle with the Word of God.

But replies Mr. Ganse: "If any one is yet dissatisfied, and insists that the Decalogue does give to slavery a standing license, surely it gives a man no broader claim to his slave than he can have to his cattle, and since the latter claim stands not by mere possession, but by rightful possession, so must the former. If one were suspected of having stolen an ox, or of having received it after it was stolen, he could hardly arrest the investigation by quoting the words 'his ox' out of the Decalogue, to prove that a man might own an ox; and if a similar suspicion should arise in re-

gard to a slave, a similar quotation of the words 'his slave,' if the law contained them, would not bar proceedings. Such an expression might prove a man's right to hold a slave, which we do not deny, but it could not settle summarily that man's right to that particular slave." (p. 11.) Here Mr. Ganse, while he admits that the Decalogue does "give to slavery a standing license," denies that it gives any more right to a man to hold a stolen slave than to hold stolen cattle. We hope that the abolitionist will remember this important comment on this precept. He then admits that the expression "his slave" in the Decalogue, "might prove a man's right to hold a slave, *which we do not deny.*" This then settles the question. The Decalogue, it is admitted, though it does not give the right to hold a stolen slave, yet *does give the right to hold a slave.*

How Mr. Ganse will "show by their etymology that the original terms for 'man-servant' and 'maid-servant,' in the Decalogue, have not the least hint of slavery in them," we know not. Gesenius gives as the primary meaning of the verb *avad*, "*to labor, to work, to do work.*" This will not enable us to get the distinctive idea of slavery, for the sentence of God has condemned *all men* to labor. (Gen. 3 : 19.) But our object is to know what sort of labor is that of a *slave*, as distinguished from the labor of a *free man*. Mr. Ganse, happily for us, furnishes us with the distinc-

tion. He says: "Slavery, under the Old Testament, whether Patriarchal or Mosaic, was marked by two conditions. The first was that *essential element of control* on the part of the master, and *involuntary obedience* upon the part of the slave, without which it would not have been slavery at all." (p. 13.) We imagine that the abolitionists will not thank Mr. Ganse for his definition of slavery, if he intends it for a definition. After this they will surely renounce church-fellowship with him, regardless of his skill in etymology. Here he gives the meaning of slavery. It means not merely *labor*, but *compulsory labor*. We had thought that we had given a sufficient definition of a *slave* on page 10 of our pamphlet, where we say that he is "a man who is not at his own disposal, but who is bound to serve and is the property of his master." This we insist is, to use Mr. Ganse's words, "the qualification of the term slaveholding or slavery, to designate the relation between Abraham and his servants; between the Israelites under the law and theirs; between the heathen Romans and theirs; between the early Christians and theirs, and lastly between our countrymen and theirs. There runs through all these relations "this one constant element."

This is what we mean by slaveholding and slavery. That the Hebrew term *eved*, in the Decalogue and the Old Testament, does not mean a free hired domestic

or servant, is admitted by Mr. Ganse himself, from his acknowledgment that an essential element of the slavery spoken of in it was "control on the part of the master, &c." We shall now endeavor to prove that "*Bible Slaveholding*" means "the legal holding of a man as property, in involuntary servitude, and compelling him to work without his consent, or any contract with him by his owner and master."

First—The holding of the slave must be sanctioned by law. We would no more advocate the stealing of slaves or of men than we would the conduct of those deluded men from the Northern States, who, it is strongly asserted, have endeavored to stir up the slaves to insurrection, and to massacre their masters. The law of the land as well as the law of God must give to the master his right.

Secondly—The slave is the property of his master. The Bible says so, the law of the land says so. The Bible says: "If a man smite his servant or his maid with a rod, and he die under his hand, he shall be surely punished. Notwithstanding, if he continue a day or two, he shall not be punished: *for he is his money*;" that is, *that which is bought with his money, his purchase*. (Exod. 21 : 20, 21.) But can this possibly refer to hired free domestics? These surely were not bought by his money, nor might he flog them so that they should die from the severity of their chastisement, and yet he escape punishment if they did

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not die within the space of a day or two after. The reason why he was not prosecuted was because the servant or maid was his property, and he had the right suitably and not cruelly to chastise them when they, by their improper conduct, merited it. It is to be presumed, too, that a man, from a regard to his own wealth, and prosperity, and reputation, will not wantonly and wickedly destroy his own property, but take care of it, for his own sake, if from no higher motive. Again, God permitted and so made it lawful for the Israelites to "buy bondmen and bondmaids of the heathen round about them," and said, "they shall be your possession: and ye shall take them as an inheritance for your children after you, to inherit them for a possession; they shall be your bondmen forever." (Lev. 25: 44-46.) Such servants were not liberated at the Jubilee. Slaves then were property that could be bought, and sold, and owned, and bequeathed as an inheritance.

Another element that runs through the relation of a master and slave is the right of the master to require and compel his slave to labor for and serve him. Of the Israelite, who because of poverty was sold to his Israelitish brother, God said: "Thou shalt not compel him to serve as a bond-servant." (Lev. 25: 39.) This withholding of the right to compel the Israelite to serve as a bond-servant, implied that the right to compel the bond-slave to do so was

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granted. Hence it is said of the bought heathen, (v. 46,) "they shall be your bondmen forever." According to Gesenius, the letter *Beth* prefixed to the object of the verb gives to the verb the causative sense elsewhere expressed by the conjugation Hiphil, and then the words should be translated, "ye shall compel them to serve you." Our Lord Jesus has taught us that this right belonged to the master over the slave in his day. (Luke 17 : 7-9.) Gesenius gives as the third meaning of the verb *avad*, "to make serve, to impose service upon any one;" and gives the following references and examples of this meaning, Lev. 25 : 39, 46 ; Exod. 1 : 14 ; Jer. 22 : 13 ; 25 : 14 ; 30 : 8. He says that in Hiphil it means, "*to cause to work, to compel to labor.*" (Exod. 1 : 13 ; 6 : 5, &c.) Stockius, in his *Clavis*, defines the word to mean, "*to make to serve, to reduce to servitude, to force to servitude, to compel any one to work for him, to treat any one like a slave, cruelly, nay, even in an arbitrary and despotic manner.* It has this transitive signification both in Kal, Gen. 15 : 13 ; Lev. 25 : 39 ; Jer. 30 : 8 ; 34 : 9, and in Hiphil, Exod. 6 : 15 ; Jer. 15 : 14 ; 17 : 4." Gesenius defines the word *eved*, commonly translated in our Bible a man-servant, as meaning, 1. primarily, *a servant, who among the Hebrews was also a slave.* (Gen. 12 : 16 ; 17 : 23 ; 39 : 17 ; Exod. 12 : 30, 34, with other references.) Stockius defines the term, as "*one who is of a meaner condition, and who serves*



*another by labor and work, whether he be bought by money or captured in war ; that is a slave,"* and refers to Exod. 20 : 10 ; Deut. 5 : 14.

This, then, is what we mean by slaveholding "the legal right of the master to hold and dispose of the slave, as his owner, and to compel him to serve him without his consent or any compact between them. This slaveholding, we say, the Bible permits, and therefore, is not sinful.

It is proper to remark, too, that this is all we mean. The power to compel is not absolute, but restricted. The master is a man accountable to God—the slave is a man whose rights are protected by God. The nature and extent of the man's right to and property in any object, is limited to and defined by that object. His right in and over his wife differs in many respects from his right in and over his child, and both differ from his right in and over his slave, and all three differ from his right in and over his house or his ox or his ass. He has important duties to perform towards his slave, as a man, resulting from his right and property in and to him, and the privileges, temporal and spiritual, which many of the slaves enjoy at the South, and the kind concern of their masters for their temporal and spiritual welfare, equal, we doubt not, those that were ever enjoyed under the Mosaic dispensation.

We have endeavored to answer Mr. Ganse's first

objection to our argument, and we hope we have succeeded "in defining our terms."


If we understand Mr. Ganse aright, another objection is, that while slavery of some sort is countenanced "under the Old Testament, by express law establishing and defining a system of slaveholding, (p. 12,) that slavery was instituted solely for its own times," and for the special benefit of the slave, (pp. 13, 14, 15,) and therefore our argument drawn from it fails. He says: "There is, and there can be, no identity or resemblance between the essence of Old Testament slavery and that of any other slavery that the world shall ever see. That slavery was instituted solely for its own times. . . . It began rightfully, in God's distinct command, and it blessed its subjects infinitely more than they could have been blessed without it;" that "every slave, by the fact that he was a slave, was entitled to every religious privilege of the new community into which he entered;" and that there was as much kindness to the heathen as to the Israelites themselves, "in the provision that some of these Gentiles, already condemned for their sins, should be made at once to render service to God's people, and to share in God's blessing." (pp. 13, 14, 15.)

We confess that this presents slavery and slaveholding to us in a new aspect. We have considered slavery as an evil, and as one of the penal effects of

the fall and wickedness of man. But Mr. Ganse teaches, if we do not misunderstand him, that it was *a divine institution of a means of grace*. He says: "It began rightfully in God's distinct command, and it blessed its subjects infinitely more than they could have been blessed without it." (p. 15.) It seems, therefore, that in those days enslaving the heathen was one of the outward and ordinary means by which God brought the heathen to the knowledge of himself. If so we cannot perceive what reason there can be why, if slaves are now, in our country, brought to the knowledge of God, and to participate in the ordinances and blessings of his covenant, it is sinful to hold them.

We remark, however, that the argument of Mr. Ganse is untenable with relation to the holding of slaves under the strictly Mosaic or Levitical dispensation. First—Because he rests the right of the slave to the religious privileges of the covenant on a false foundation—on "the fact that he was a *slave*." This fact, then, must be of universal application; and the fact that a man is a slave must entitle him to church-fellowship and privileges. We think that the words of the covenant plainly show that the foundation of the rights of the slave is, that he was a human being, born in the family of the Israelite, and so a member of his household.

Secondly—His argument is untenable because, in




fact, they often did not at all obtain the benefits which he specifies. It was *the duty* of the Israelites to give them these privileges and blessings, and their slaves, by the command of God, had a right to them. But what became of their religious privileges during such fearful apostasies into idolatry as happened in the days of Ahab and other kings. Yet the law allowing the Jews to hold them as slaves was in force. God did not repeal it though it was sadly abused.

We reply thirdly, that slavery is not represented as a blessing, but as a curse. This we have already shown. If it had been designed as a blessing God would not have forbidden the Israelites to make bond-servants of their brethren, while he permitted them to make bond-servants of the heathen; nor would he have so severely resented the conduct of the Jews, who, in the days of Jeremiah, compelled their brethren to continue in bondage longer than seven years. (Jer. 34 : 8-22.)

We reply again, that Mr. Ganse errs greatly in representing the law concerning slavery in the Abrahamic Covenant as part of the political law of the Israelitish nation, and ending with their civil polity. This is not the doctrine of the Reformed Dutch Church. That says in the form of baptism, that "God speaketh unto Abraham, the father of all the faithful, and therefore unto us and our children. (Gen. 17 : 7.) (See the Form of Baptism.) Our church distinctly

and fully recognizes the existence and authority of the Covenant made with Abraham, as giving to the visible church, first by circumcision and then by baptism, an existence and a form distinct from the world. In this Covenant, God dealt with Abraham as the "father of the faithful," and he designed that it should stand as His Covenant with his church through all time. Circumcision formerly, and baptism now, is the seal of this covenant and of its spiritual blessings which are to be received from Christ, in whom, as the seed of Abraham, all nations shall be blessed. Hence our form of baptism refers to Acts 2: 39; to show that the promise of the covenant belongs to the church now, and that children born in the visible church should be baptized as "heirs of the kingdom of God and of His covenant." Our argument is, that by commanding that every man child among the Hebrews who was eight days old should be circumcised, whether born in the house or *bought with money*; by permitting Abraham to hold slaves, and not only permitting, but "blessing him greatly by giving him men-servants (slaves) and maid-servants (slaves), (Gen. 24: 35,) God recognized and sanctioned slaveholding as not sinful. Mr. Ganse, however, says "there is then and there can be no identity or resemblance between the essence of Old Testament slavery, and that of any other slavery the world shall ever see. . . . That slaveholding was not sinful." (pp. 14, 15.) Now the




slaveholding of Abraham was the common slaveholding of the country in which he lived, and was established and protected by the laws of the country. Mr. Ganse surely will not say that Abraham gained possession of his slaves illegally, and by violence or fraud. He will not accuse him of being a "piratical man-stealer." God says in his covenant, "every man child in your generations, he that is born in the house or *bought with money* of any stranger that is not of thy seed." Here we learn that traffic in slaves and buying them with money was established in the days of Abraham; we learn that the right of property, even of *property in slaves* was established and protected by law, that Abraham complied with the law and usages of the land in which he lived, and bought slaves and held them, and more than this, that the covenant contemplated the continuance of the buying and selling of slaves, for it says, "in your generations." It was not as Mr. Ganse says, merely "the authorization of slaveholding in that particular instance." (p. 8.) He asserts this but does not prove it. The Bible does not say what he says. It says, "in your generations," and that the covenant is "for an everlasting covenant." In it God dealt with Abraham as "the father of the faithful," with all of whom he covenanted through him—Moses and the prophets, Christ and the apostles, Stephen and the martyrs, Calvin and the reformers—all received the sign of this covenant; all its spiritual

provisions and promises belong to the church of the present day, and because of it we now have the Bible, and the ministry, and the Sacraments, and all the means of grace. But if in this covenant God "authorized" Abraham to hold slaves, he authorized the children of Abraham, with whom he also covenanted, to hold them. He did not give a law commanding them to do so. We thank him that he did not. Had he done so it would have been our duty to hold slaves. He recognizes and sanctions slaveholding, but does not command it.

The Decalogue was indeed a part of the law given to the Israelites in the wilderness, but it was not a law for the Jews exclusively. It is binding on all men, and is the law of the covenant and of the church. Christ has ratified and explained it, (Matt. 5: 17, 19,) and in the Fourth and Tenth Commandments it recognizes and sanctions slaveholding.

The holding of slaves was sanctioned afterwards by special enactment, in the political law given to the Jews, defining *what kind of persons* they might hold as such. (Lev. 25: 39-46.) It is to this, we suppose, that Mr. Ganse refers when he says, "We grant very cheerfully all that the argument (Dr. How's) before us can be thought to prove, namely, that slavery of some sort is countenanced in the Bible; under the Old Testament by express law establishing and defining a system of slaveholding." (p. 12.) The last part of this




statement we beg leave positively to deny as wholly incorrect. The Mosaic law did not *establish* slavery among the Hebrews. The covenant with Abraham had recognized and sanctioned it "four hundred and thirty years before the law of Moses." If we are to seek for the beginning of the existence of slavery in the visible church of God, we must go back from Moses to Abraham; from the political law given at Sinai to the covenant made in Canaan. Nor does the annulling of the ceremonial and political law of the Jews set aside that covenant. (Gal. 3: 7, 8, 14, 17.) Nor does the Old Testament "*define*," that is, give an exact and full definition of the nature of the relation between master and slave, in its details, and tell what elements are comprised in it. It uses the simple term "bond-servant," as distinguished from "a hired servant." (v. 39, 40.) All the parade of Mr. Ganse about etymology, and usage, and forms, and principles, and elements, and essences, as applied to slavery, we consider as utterly futile; just as much so as if we should use them in seeking to ascertain what the word *man*, or husband, or wife, or son, or hired servant meant. Slaves have existed from the remotest posterity in almost every nation, and every nation has a term used to denote a slave. We have heretofore thought that the term in the Old and New Testament has the old and established meaning that every where and at all times has been given to it.



But we are now told that in this we are mistaken ; that "there is, and can be, no identity between the essence of Old Testament slavery and that of any other slavery that the world shall ever see." (p. 14.) This we take the liberty of most positively denying, and we do so the more boldly because Mr. Ganse offers no proof of it.

We deny it, because the covenant with Abraham, while at the present day it recognizes and sanctions slaveholding, seals to the baptized child of the slave, when devoted to God in baptism by its believing master, all the spiritual blessings which it seals to the child of the master. Mr. Ganse confuses and misleads his readers by the inaccuracy and the boldness of his assertions. On p. 13, speaking of slavery under the Old Testament, he very correctly says of the slave, that he was "circumcised, he was instructed, he was to keep the Sabbath and the feasts, and whatever hope of God's favor might grow out of these opportunities was as fairly open to him as to Abraham or any of his children." To this we assent; and so at the present day the baptized child of the slave is admitted, like other children, to the promises and privileges of the covenant; and ever has been since its institution.

The law, (Lev. 25: 46-49) did not originate the right to slaveholding, it only restricted that right to holding the heathen as bond-slaves, while it forbid




the making of the Hebrews such. This was its sole intent. The other political laws of the Hebrews did not originate the right to slaveholding, but "largely modified the authority of the master and the labors of the slave." If the question before us was whether masters have the right to abuse, and wrong, and injure their slaves, or if it was whether we should hold communion with churches that openly and avowedly allow, without censure, their members, who are masters, thus to treat their slaves, we unhesitatingly say no. But here is the mistake of Mr. Ganse and the abolitionists. They represent American Slavery as a monster unequalled. Piracy, man-stealing, chains, groans, impurity, cruelty, nay, savage brutality, every opprobrious term that language can supply is *indiscriminately* heaped upon—whom? Why our Southern brethren and fellow-Christians—members of God's Church, who are conscientiously laboring for the temporal and spiritual welfare of their slaves. With such men, and not with irreligious and cruel men only, have many of our Northern churches refused to hold fellowship.

Now if God recognized and sanctioned the holding of slaves by members of his visible Church, by his covenant with Abraham, and afterwards by his laws to the Israelites, regulating and limiting the right to hold slaves, and if, as Mr. Ganse says, the religious privileges which the slaves enjoyed by being brought

into bondage among the Israelites, rendered their slaveholding not sinful, but a blessing to the slaves, then we contend that this argument applies with greater force to slaveholders in the American Christian Church. It is a part of that one and the same old church to which Abraham and the Israelites belonged, and under the same covenant. (Rom. 11: 15-22.) It, however, is under a dispensation of the covenant distinguished for greater light and privileges, and a larger outpouring of the Holy Spirit. All the reasons, therefore, that, according to Mr. Ganse, rendered slavery a blessing under the Levitical dispensation, go to prove that it is a blessing under the Gospel dispensation. If, as he says, "slaveholding began rightfully, in God's distinct command, and it blessed its subjects infinitely more than they could have been blessed without it," then the slaves at the South, under the Gospel dispensation, are placed in a better situation for acquiring the knowledge of Christ and salvation than were the Hebrew slaves.

We see only two ways of evading the force of this argument; the one by denying that the visible church of the present day is under the Abrahamic Covenant, and the same with the Old Testament church of which the patriarchs, with Moses and the prophets, were members. But to do this is to contradict the teachings of the Apostle, (Rom. 11, Gal. 3, Eph. 2,) and of the standards of the Reformed Dutch Church.




The only other way of evading the argument is by saying that because of slaveholding the Southern churches are so apostate as that God has rejected them, and that they are so under his curse that it is wicked to hold fellowship with them. To say this is to establish in the nineteenth century a new term of church-fellowship never before heard of, that no slaveholder can inherit the kingdom of God, and so flatly to contradict the Scriptures, and arrogantly to usurp the authority of the Lord Jesus Christ, to whom only it belongs to make laws and appoint terms of communion in his Church.

We have argued with Mr. Ganse on his own avowed principle, that Mosaic slaveholding was a blessing to the slave. It was so incidentally. But slavery, in itself, apart from all its connections and relations, is an evil; is the penalty of sin; is a result of God's curse. He mercifully, by his wisdom and his grace, sometimes

"Makes the curse a blessing prove."

Mr. Ganse objects that if "the connection of the rite of circumcision with slavery gives to slavery itself all the permanence of that rite, and of baptism which has taken its place, he claims the privilege of arguing similarly from the circumcision of Ishmael, which is said to have been by divine direction, (Gen. 17: 23,) and from the broad command that included 'every man-child in their generations,' and thus to

prove a standing law of concubinage and polygamy." (p. 9.) The idea of *a law* seems to haunt Mr. Ganse. Is there no distinction between a positive enactment and a tacit and implied, though real, recognition and permission? no distinction between a precept and a penalty? God has not given a law commanding either slaveholding or polygamy. Polygamy, like slaveholding, is an evil, and a result of the fall of man and his wickedness. It is, where it exists, a chief source of degradation, and of many evils to both the man and the woman; but especially to the woman, and is a gross abuse of the power which the man has over the woman. God permitted this evil to exist under his covenant, as he permitted, and as he now permits, some sins and errors to exist in his church, and in individual believers. But slaveholding is no where condemned as polygamy is, Mal. 2: 14, 15, where God complains of the cruelty and treachery of the Jews to the wives of their youth—that is, to their first wives, in divorcing them, and in taking other wives beside them. He calls their attention to the original law of marriage, as designed to be between but one man and one woman, for though God could have created many women, he created but one, to teach us that "every man should have his own wife, and every woman her own husband." (1 Cor. 7: 2.) Malachi was the last of the prophets whose writings are transmitted to us. He



lived near to the time of the coming of Christ, and he admonished them that when he came he would be among them "as a refiner and purifier of silver;" that he would require of them a closer adherence than they had shown before to his original institutions and commands, and among other things would recall them to the original law of marriage, between one man and one woman only. It seems probable that this reformation was effected even before the coming of Christ, for it is remarkable that no mention is made of polygamy, as an existing practice, in the New Testament. The Apostle Paul speaks of marriage on the supposition that it signifies the union of one man with one woman, (Rom. 7 : 2, 3 ; 1 Cor. 7 : 12-16,) and Christ expressly condemns both polygamy and divorce, and states the law of marriage. (Mark 10 : 6-9 ; Matt. 19 : 4-6.) When Mr. Ganse can produce any such plain condemnations of slaveholding, or show, that like polygamy, it was from the beginning excluded from the Christian churches, we will grant that he has proved that slaveholding ought not to be tolerated any more than polygamy.

Another, and the last objection that we shall notice, is that no "such a thing is known or possible under the government of God, as authority commissioned to limit the advantage of its subjects. On the other hand, we maintain that the design of all lawful authority is to encourage and protect the extension of

such advantage to its widest limits." (p. 62.) He denies the "master's right to extort from the slave any services for which the slave should not receive, in some form, a full equivalent;" and he asserts that "no government is entitled to a tittle of the goods or service of its subjects upon any other score than that of a just remuneration." (p. 88.)

He distinguishes between what he calls "the mere forms of slavery and the principles of slavery." The principle of slavery, he says, in the days of the Apostles, was as clearly defined as any idea could possibly be. "It was this; that the master was the absolute proprietor of the slave." (p. 29.) We hope that he does not intend to evade the question of a master's ownership, by using the qualifying word *absolute*, as if proprietorship "gave a right to take the slave's life and grossly to abuse him. Ownership implies no such right, and we take for granted that holding the slave as property is all that is meant, and that this is the principle of slavery which he says the Apostles "condemned utterly," and "left master and slave standing, not on any footing of abstract right and obligation, but of simple Gospel duty under the circumstances." (p. 29.)

Another principle of slavery is, that it obliges a servant to labor involuntarily, "at the discretion of the master," or "for the master's benefit." This, he says, "all disinterested christendom maintains, that

the spirit of the Gospel is averse to." He asks indignantly: "What is this modern abstraction of 'slavery' that presumes to dictate to the Gospel? What is this, with its notions of 'the master's benefit' and 'the transfer of claims,' that it should stand up against the simplest law of Christ? The Apostles never heard of such a thing; they never uttered a sentence, or a word, out of which the arbitrary notion could define itself." (pp. 33, 34.)


In commenting on Colos. 4: 1, Eph. 6: 9, and the case of Philemon, he insists that these portions of Scripture prove that the master must renounce all ownership in and all authority over the slave, to compel him to labor for his (the master's) benefit. (pp. 37-47.) Still he objects to the immediate emancipation of the slaves at the South. (p. 52.) He says: "While we utterly disclaim the idea of ownership in a man, we admit the claim of service; which stands by the very fact that the forms of slavery cannot be abolished, and which, by the conscientious care of a Christian master over one who needs that care, acquires the sanction of justice. Where slavery exists, the master who has done his full duty towards his slave, has a claim of duty in return." (p. 52.) He says that the fixed limits of all authority are "the unrestricted advantage of its subjects." (p. 69.)

We have, with much care and patience, endeavored to discover what Mr. Ganse means by "Bible



Slaveholding," as distinct from slaveholding. As far as we have been able to ascertain, it means—1. That the master has no proprietorship in the slave or ownership of him. (p. 29.) 2. That he has no right to compel the slave involuntarily to serve or work for him. (p. 33.) 3. That for any services the slave must receive a full equivalent (pp. 35, 38); and 4. The holding of the slave must be, not for the benefit of the master, but for the unrestricted advantage of the slave, so that he may make "the greatest ultimate advancement in property, and intelligence, and social and political position for which his own true energy and merit adapt him." (p. 64.) All this is what Mr. Ganse calls "Bible Slaveholding," and the form or forms of slavery without its principles. Now he has understanding to know that these requirements are utterly inconsistent with slaveholding, and if he insists that they all are requisite that slaveholding may not be sinful, then he virtually joins the abolitionist and contends that slaveholding is sinful.

To follow him in all his assertions and declamations would require more time and labor than it is convenient for us to give at present to the subject. He seems to forget that positive assertion is not argument nor proof, and as the proofs which we have offered, that slaveholding includes ownership and the right to compel involuntary service, (see Luke 17 : 7-9,) have not been directly met and set aside, we shall adhere to them still.



As we have mentioned two replies to the Argument of "Slaveholding not Sinful," we think it not improper to insert the two following favorable notices of it. The first is from a gentleman in Kentucky, who wishes his name to be suppressed. It is dated

. . . . . Kentucky, January 14, 1856.

"The Address (Slaveholding not Sinful,) was perused by myself with many others, and we cannot refrain from expressing our hearty concurrence as well as warm admiration for your able exposition of Biblical truths, and the generous defence of your brethren of the North Carolina Classis.

"The action of the Synod can but be deplored and deprecated by conservative men of all creeds and parties, as tending to weaken and disturb those fraternal relations, (both religious and political,) which have and, it is to be hoped, will still exist among the people of the different sections of our glorious but menaced Union.

"No sane man can or will deny that Slavery in this State would long ago have ceased to exist, had it not been for those (unfortunately for our country,) pseudo-philanthropists—the abolitionists. In their *means* zeal to abolish it, they have rendered it, doubtless, perpetual.

"I am glad to say, it is highly probable that measures will be effected by our Legislature now in Session, that will greatly aid the friends of Colonization, in their noble and laudable efforts in securing homes for the blacks in Liberia, that country which seems best adapted to them by nature, and which is doubtless the only sane and plausible method to rid the State of a burthen to itself and them—the free blacks."

The other is from E. Lord, Esq., the author of the "Epoch of the Creation," a gentleman of high reputation in the literary and theological world. It is as follows:

*Piermont, February 19, 1856.*

"REV. DOCTOR COGSWELL,

"DEAR SIR,

"It is but a few days since I borrowed from my neighbor, Rev. Mr. Cole, and read for the first time, a copy of

Rev. Dr. How's Argument, "Slaveholding not Sinful;" and not knowing where I can procure a copy, I take leave to request you to send me one, if you can do so conveniently. It exhibits not only the right view, but the best statement of the right view, of the subject, that I have met with. It is exceedingly creditable to the author, both on account of the matter of it, and on account of the christian fidelity and courage manifested in the delivery of it on the occasion, and to the body whom he addressed. . . . I hardly think that any thing has occurred of more evil omen to orthodoxy and orthodox churches, than the decision of the Synod. It teaches us that, in a representative assembly of an orthodox church, those who according to the scriptures, the confession, the polity, history and usage, are undeniably orthodox on the point in debate, are to yield and submit to those who from motives of prejudice or worldly expediency shrink from their duty, or directly set themselves in opposition. And this they are to do to prevent divisions, controversy, &c. If the orthodox are conscientious, they must, as a condition of peace with the heterodox, stifle their consciences; in a word, in order to peace (such peace as is meant, and such as the world giveth) they must give up their faith and act with the heterodox. And if they are to do this on one subject, they may be called to do it on another.

"The chief leaders of the abolition party already abjure and denounce the church, the ministry and the Bible. The aspects of the controversy indicate that ere long a division in all the churches, of those who adhere to the Bible from those who reject it wholly or in part, will be unavoidable: and then the course taken by the majority of the Synod will be better understood, and more justly appreciated than it is at present.

"Faithfully yours,  
"E. LORD."

Mr. Lord having consented to a request for permission to publish the above letter, desired that the following postscript might be added :

"P. S.—The true question respecting slavery, so far as the Bible and the religion of the Bible, in regard to discipline, communion, &c., have to do with it, is, whether *the relation* between masters and their slaves, is in itself, or in its nature sinful? The question is not, whether men do commit or may commit sin in those acts by which they cause the *relation* to exist, by capturing, purchasing, or otherwise subjecting other men to their possession and control as slaves. If they commit sin in those acts, they are accountable to God, as for all other acts. But, whether in any or all cases they commit sin in those acts or not, does not affect the question as to whether the relation, after it has been con-

stituted, is in itself sinful. It is treated in the New Testament simply as *an existing relation*, and in the Old Testament as an existing relation, and also in some other respects.

"Now, that the relation itself, wherever it may exist, and however it may have been originated, is not in itself sinful, and imposes on the church no obligation to interfere with it, in a way of discipline, or to interdict communion with either of the parties to it, is demonstrably evident.

"1. It is no where directly or impliedly treated as sinful in any part of the Scriptures. It is recognized and treated as *an existing relation*; and the parties to it are, in numerous instances, recognized and treated as in covenant with God and in fellowship with his people.

"2. It is recognized and treated as the ground of obligations and duties, which are binding on the parties between whom the relation exists; and special precepts, commands, and exhortations are accordingly addressed to the respective parties.

"3. It is in these respects, as a relation, and with reference to the obligations and duties of the church, precisely on a par with the relations between parents and children, rulers and subjects. That the relation, in these two latter instances, is not in its nature sinful, must undoubtedly be admitted by every one. We are bound, by express precepts of the Bible, "to submit and be subject to the powers that be," and "to obey magistrates," because the powers exercised by rulers are ordained of God, and magistrates are his ministers. Whether the men who rule are good or bad, tyrannical or otherwise, and whether their acts in attaining their positions of authority were or were not sinful, does not affect the question. When they have attained the power, the relation between them and their subjects is constituted; and as a relation, is recognized by the Scriptures, and made the ground of obligations and duties, to deny and resist which is treated as sin against God.

"So of the relation between parents and children—wherever it exists it is recognized and treated as not in itself sinful, and as a ground of special obligations and duties. That relation may be originated in particular instances, and indefinitely, by acts, on the part of those who become parents, as sinful as the act of 'man-stealing,' or any of the acts by which tyrants obtain power and become rulers. But wherever the relation has been constituted and actually exists, the obligations and duties which grow out of it, and which are recognized and enforced by Scripture, prove that the relation itself is not sinful.

"Without going further into the subject, I am clear in saying, that so far as we are to be guided by the teachings of the Bible, it would be quite as scriptural, quite as consistent, and quite as hopeful for the church to exclude from communion all subjects of human governments, and all illegitimate children and their descendants, as to exclude masters and slaves on account of the relation existing between them. And

CONCLUSION.

I regard the vote of the Synod as an evil omen, because it is ominous of evil when the church undertakes to improve upon the divine method of governing the world, and to add to the Scriptures by enacting terms of communion which they neither prescribe nor sanction.

"E. L."

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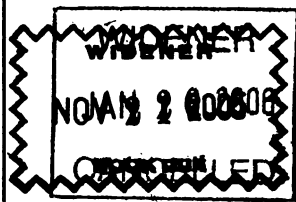


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